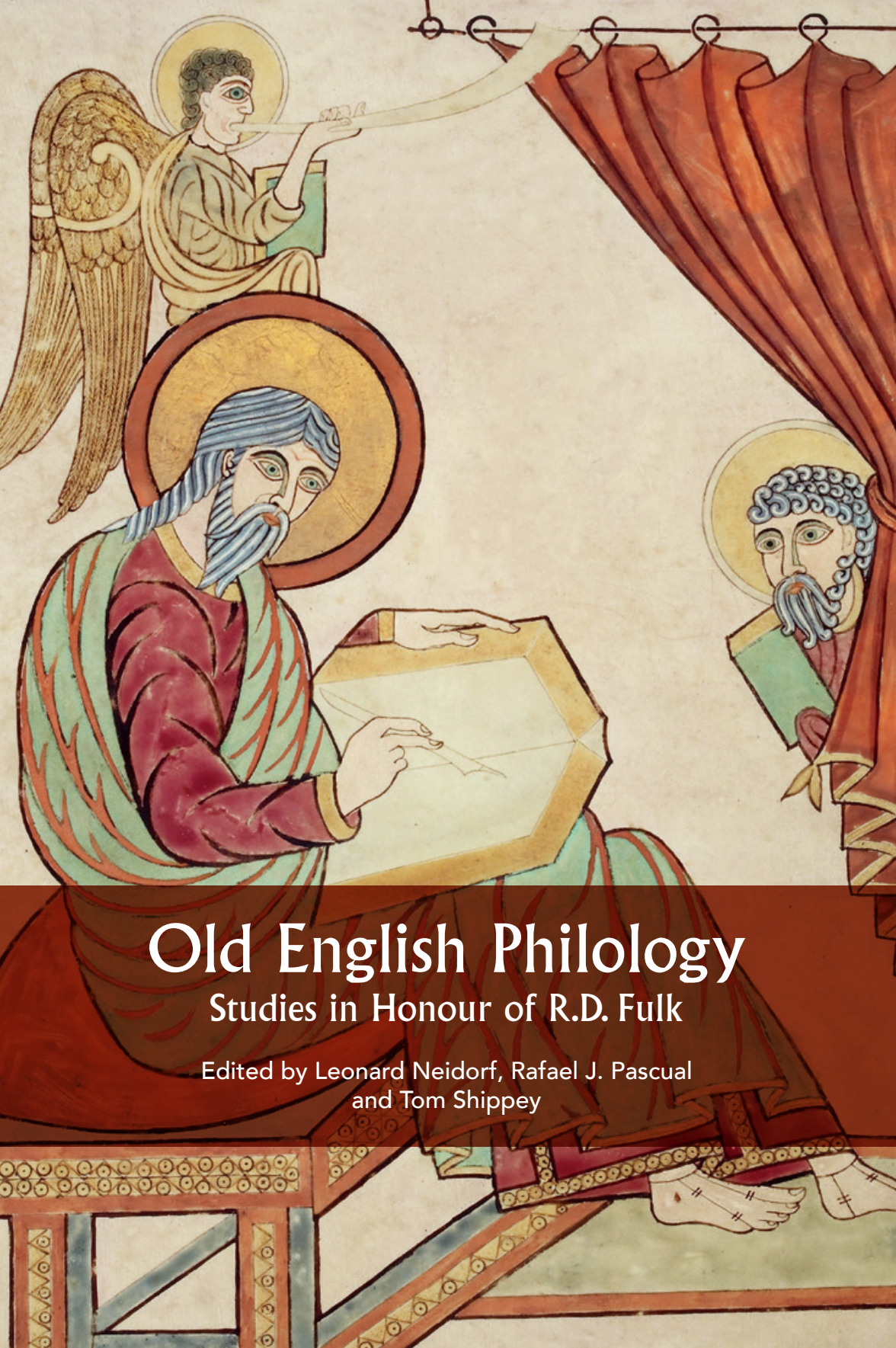




Old English Philology

Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk

Edited by Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual
and Tom Shippey

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OLD ENGLISH PHILOLOGY
STUDIES IN HONOUR OF R.D. FULK

Edited by
Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual and Tom Shippey

D. S. BREWER

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Introduction: R.D. Fulk and the Progress of Philology

Leonard Neidorf

Many festschrifts begin with an introduction that contains personal anecdotes intended to shed light upon the private life and characteristics of the honorand. Were this volume to feature such an introduction, it would be a source of displeasure to our honorand, who has always preferred to let his work speak for itself and has never been comfortable with sentimental praise. The present introduction focuses on the scholarship of Robert D. Fulk not only because the editors believe he would prefer this, but also because there is no other kind of introduction that any of us could have written. One of the editors (Pascual) has never met the honorand in the flesh, while the other two editors have interacted with him in person at only a handful of conferences. Such limited interaction ensures that we are not working under the spell of personal charm or nostalgic affection. What gave impetus to this festschrift, rather, was deep admiration for Fulk's work and a shared conviction that he is the greatest Old English philologist to emerge during the twentieth century. That this conviction is not peculiar to the editors became apparent to us by the tremendous response we received when inviting scholars to contribute to this volume. The ability of this occasion to bring together the top philologists in the profession between the covers of one book is a sign of the respect that our honorand's work commands. Accordingly, one aim of this introduction is to present the rationale behind the widespread admiration that Fulk's scholarship has elicited.

The other aim of this introduction is to indicate how the contents of this volume reflect the themes and concerns that pervade the honorand's work. One of the most impressive properties of Fulk's corpus is its patent mastery of a multitude of technical disciplines. If the aims of the following essays appear diverse, it is not an accident, but the consequence of honoring a scholar who has contributed to our knowledge of so many different aspects of Old English language and literature. To characterize the scope of Fulk's scholarship, it is best to cite the description he offered in a recent interview in the *Journal of English Linguistics*:

Since I'm a philologist, the range of my interests has been similar to that of scholars who worked in the field in its heyday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Eduard Sievers, Henry Sweet,

Walter W. Skeat, and Karl Luick. Among the publications of that group you'll find some devoted to historical linguistics, phonetics and phonology, morphology, dialectology, orthographic systems, metrics, textual editing (usually in the form of editions of medieval texts), manuscript studies (including paleography, codicology, and scribal practices), and literary hermeneutics. That's a fair accounting of the topics I've touched on, too, though naturally I've had more to say about some of these topics than others. (Grant 2014: 359)

Reading this list of topics, one might wonder what all of these technical disciplines have to do with each other. Why should one scholar work on fields as apparently unrelated as dialectology, metrics, paleography, and literary hermeneutics? Is there a principled rationale for this intellectual promiscuity, or is it simply the product of a Faustian desire for unlimited knowledge? Fulk's description of himself as "a philologist" might point us toward the answer to this question. Definitions of philology vary within and between departments, but philology, at its core, represents an academic enterprise that aims to achieve a historically informed understanding of texts written in dead languages. If philologists master an array of technical disciplines, it is not because they delight in pedantry, but because these disciplines furnish the tools that enable scholars to constrain subjectivity and resist ahistorical understanding. The value of philological knowledge inheres in its ability to reduce the extent to which anachronism and ethnocentrism cloud interpretation. It clears a path for a more accurate understanding of works composed under linguistic and cultural conditions alien to the experiences of contemporary scholars.

An example from *Beowulf* can illustrate the pivotal role that philology continues to play in Old English studies. Fulk opens his article on Unferth's name, which reconsiders the relationship between etymology and characterization in the poem, with the following remark: "It is as true now as ever that most of the larger issues in Anglo-Saxon literary scholarship cannot be resolved independently of their philological basis" (1987b: 113). The meaning of this statement becomes clear over the course of his article, as competing interpretations of Unferth's name are scrutinized and falsified in the light of evidence drawn from the fields of onomastics, dialectology, phonology, metrics, and textual criticism. The entire tradition of interpreting Unferth's name as an allegorical indication of the characteristics the poet intended him to possess is called into question, as Fulk demonstrates that every presumed etymology of this name (e.g., 'mar-peace' = 'discord,' 'un-intelligence' = 'folly,' etc.) is linguistically implausible, since *un-* (the negative prefix) and *-ferhð* ('spirit') were never used to form early Germanic personal names. Comparative onomastic data indicate that *un-* is a continental form of the Anglo-Saxon *hūn-* element (which probably means 'bear cub'), while *ferhð* represents the West Saxon metathesis of Anglian *frið*,

‘peace.’ Etymology thus appears to have no relationship to characterization. The presence of a continental name-element suggests, moreover, that the name is not a literary invention, but an inheritance from earlier heroic-legendary tradition. The name is used for the simple reason that “*Ūnferð* happened to be the man’s name” (1987b: 127).

What unites the eclectic forms of evidence Fulk adduced is their ability to direct our attention to various historical considerations that must inform and constrain our understanding of Unferth and his name. Without the constraints imposed by philological knowledge, modern scholarship can easily succumb to meretricious interpretations that, although they cannot be reconciled to the facts, accord well with anachronistic and ethnocentric assumptions held by contemporary readers. For scholars who were raised on literary works where names possess characterological significance, the assumption that names in *Beowulf* were invented to reveal character traits seems plausible enough. The improbability of this assumption becomes apparent only after acquaintance is made with an array of pertinent facts drawn from technical disciplines. Reasonable observers then discard naïve assumptions and revise their understanding in light of the philological evidence brought forward. That scholars should need to revise their views in the aftermath of Fulk’s article is not incidental, but is rather a programmatic consequence of philological scholarship, which arrives at the most probable hypothesis through the systematic elimination of improbable alternatives. As Fulk observed, philology’s commitment to falsification renders it “at odds with what many literary scholars believe, because the purpose of philology is to narrow the range of possible interpretations rather than to treat all reasonable ones as equal” (2014b: 23). This methodological imperative encourages intellectual promiscuity in the philologist, since the more a philologist masters ancillary disciplines, the more apparent the relative probability of competing hypotheses becomes.

Another reason for the diversity of technical disciplines pursued by philologists is their utility in the realm of textual criticism. The establishment of reliable texts by distinguishing genuine readings from scribal corruptions is sufficiently central to the activities of philologists that some consider textual criticism the defining pursuit of philology. Indeed, Fulk has remarked, “In classical studies philology is generally regarded as an aggregate of the various modes of inquiry required for the editing of texts in extinct languages” (Grant 2014: 364). To detect and emend corruptions, the textual critic must often embrace considerations pertaining to paleography, dialectology, metrics, literary hermeneutics, and every branch of historical linguistics. Textual criticism thus provides a coherent rationale for the disparate pursuits of philologists, and the need to conduct textual criticism arises not merely when philologists decide to edit medieval works. Rather, critical

scrutiny of the authenticity of linguistic data is a defining feature of philological scholarship – it is, in fact, the feature that is generally held to distinguish philology from linguistics, where data tend to be adduced without suspicion. For the philologist, a text transmitted in a tenth-century manuscript cannot be uncritically regarded as a specimen of tenth-century language. Signs of textual transmission must be pursued alongside indicators of the work's date of composition, and this evidence must be combined to reconstruct a textual history. If an eighth-century work is regarded as a product of the tenth century, the error is bound to obscure our understanding of linguistic and cultural history. The philologist strives to see through the extant manuscript in order to replace naïve apprehension of the evidence with historically informed understanding.

Fulk's magnum opus, *A History of Old English Meter* (1992), represents arguably the most comprehensive and strenuous effort in the history of the discipline to arrange our chaotic evidence into a coherent chronology. The corpus of Old English poetry is preserved in various contexts: much of it is recorded in vernacular manuscripts from the tenth and eleventh centuries, though some poems were recorded in Latin manuscripts from the eighth and ninth centuries (e.g., *Cædmon's Hymn*, *Bede's Death Song*, *Leiden Riddle*), while others were recorded in archaic runic inscriptions (e.g., *Dream of the Rood*, *Franks Casket*). Nineteenth-century philologists recognized that the mass of poems transmitted in manuscripts from ca. 1000 could not all be contemporaneous with each other. Linguistic and metrical differences between these works suggested that they were composed at various dates over the course of several centuries. Transcription errors, meanwhile, confirmed that the manuscripts contained copies of works that, in some cases, must have been committed to parchment well before the year 1000. The presence in late manuscripts of works demonstrably composed centuries earlier (such as *Dream of the Rood* and *Leiden Riddle*) also made it clear that dates of extant manuscripts had no connection to dates of composition. For Old English poems to be adduced responsibly in studies pertaining to the history of the English language or the history of Anglo-Saxon literature, it is necessary to dissociate them from their haphazard contexts of preservation and resituate them in their probable contexts of composition.

A History of Old English Meter carved the corpus of Old English poetry into four periods (archaic, Cynewulfian, Alfredian, late) by tracking the distribution of metrical archaisms and innovations (1992: 348–51). The metrical system remained stable – the basic four-position principle of verse construction obtained throughout the Anglo-Saxon period – but the ability of poets to fill metrical positions with linguistic material changed as the spoken language evolved. *Beowulf*, *Genesis A*, *Daniel*, *Exodus*, *Guthlac A*, and *Christ III* rank among the

earliest compositions (ca. 675–750?) because these works contain the highest incidence of verses requiring archaic phonology for scansion. The works of Cynewulf, along with *Andreas*, *Phoenix*, and *Guthlac B*, belong to a later period (ca. 775–850?) of classical poetry, since they conform to the traditional conventions of versification, but exhibit a measurable decline in the use of archaic forms. Works belonging to the Alfredian period, meanwhile, combine the loss of archaisms with the introduction of several linguistically conditioned innovations. Poems composed during the tenth and eleventh centuries continue this trend, evincing few archaisms alongside a wider array of innovations. Earlier philologists, such as Richter (1910) and Sarrazin (1907), had reached similar conclusions in less comprehensive studies, but the critique of their arguments mounted by Amos (1980) rendered many scholars skeptical of linguistic dating criteria. Fulk effectively turned the tide by demonstrating that such skepticism was not intellectually defensible: the concentration of archaisms in some works and the concentration of innovations in others cannot reasonably be regarded as a coincidence.

Although it resuscitated an earlier tradition of philological research, *A History of Old English Meter* represented a genuinely new development in the discipline. Advances in Indo-European linguistics, as well as in Old English phonology and morphology, consistently informed Fulk's argumentation and distinguished it from that of his predecessors. The comprehensive scope of the book – the fact that it assessed the chronological significance of every proposed archaism and innovation – was likewise unprecedented, having been neither achieved nor attempted in any previous study. The book's comprehensiveness has doubtless been instrumental in creating a consensus among philologists that Fulk's central argument is correct. When examining one dating criterion in isolation, it is possible to dismiss its distribution as an accident of dialectal or stylistic variation, but when more than six criteria conspire to adumbrate the same chronology, it becomes difficult to doubt their reliability. Subsequent philological research has repeatedly validated Fulk's conclusions and materialized independent support for the relative chronology (e.g., Russom 2002, Cronan 2004, Lapidge 2006, Neidorf 2013–14, Bredehoft 2014). Subsequent research has, in fact, generated no compelling reason to doubt that Fulk's relative chronology is essentially correct, as B.R. Hutcheson observed when explaining his views on the dating of *Beowulf*:

I myself believe *Beowulf* is probably an eighth-century poem, and that the weight of all of the evidence Fulk presents in his book tells strongly in favor of an eighth-century date. This weight is considerable. In the now over ten years since *A History of Old English Meter* appeared, I have yet to see a scholarly argument that succeeds in meeting or even attempts to meet his arguments head-on, never mind refute them (2004: 299).

More than a decade later, Hutcheson's statement remains accurate, and it might be added that credence in Fulk's relative chronology has increased with the proliferation of studies that independently corroborate his conclusions. Objections can be raised here and there, but it is doubtful that a superior holistic explanation for the distribution of archaisms and innovations in the extant corpus will ever materialize. Until an alternative hypothesis is shown to explain these regularities more effectively, Fulk's conclusions will continue to provide the chronological framework for all serious research on Old English poetry.

The one aspect of *A History of Old English Meter* to engender detailed disputation was its argumentation concerning Kaluza's law (1992: 153–68, 381–92). Building on the work of Kaluza (1896) and Bliss (1967), Fulk demonstrated that the application of resolution under secondary stress in *Beowulf* alone is governed by etymological length distinctions that became phonologically indistinct early in the Anglo-Saxon period. The conditioning behind this regularity had eluded previous investigators, but Fulk proposed that it was phonologically conditioned: the *Beowulf* poet distinguished between etymologically long and short desinences because he composed while such distinctions remained audible in the language he spoke. If this explanation is correct, then it is probable that *Beowulf* was composed prior to 725, since distinctions crucial to the operation of the law had collapsed in Mercia by that time. The emergence of such a firm *terminus ad quem* for *Beowulf* naturally made Kaluza's law the subject of controversy, and some researchers went on to argue that it was conditioned by morphology, semantics, or oral tradition. A weakness common to these explanations is their inability to account for the diminished observation of Kaluza's law in later poems – a phenomenon collaterally explained under Fulk's chronological interpretation. The alternative explanations have received few adherents, and a recent review of the literature on Kaluza's law vindicated Fulk's position, concluding that the hypothesis of phonological conditioning provides the only tenable explanation for this regularity (Neidorf and Pascual 2014). Consequently, the impression that Fulk is the scholar who conclusively dated *Beowulf* appears justified.

Fulk's achievements extend far beyond the study of Old English poetry, however. In recent years, he has successfully queried the long-standing assumption that most Old English prose works were composed during or after the reign of King Alfred (2010a, 2012b). The surviving prose works, like much of the poetic corpus, are preserved predominantly in manuscripts from the tenth and eleventh centuries. Scholars have been inclined to assume chronological parity between composition and preservation, but Fulk has demonstrated that there are strong linguistic reasons to doubt that a substantial portion of the prose corpus was composed in the later Anglo-Saxon period. Mercian

features pervade the language of many anonymous, undated works, including *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, *The Wonders of the East*, *Bald's Leechbook*, *Scriftboc*, and various homilies and saint's lives. The concentration of Mercianisms in these works distinguishes them from all works known to have originated after the year 950, which are invariably composed in an unmixed form of the West Saxon literary language (2012b). The virtual absence of Mercian features from the corpus of verifiably late works suggests that the composition of works containing myriad Mercianisms substantially antedated the middle of the tenth century. Fulk concludes that although these works cannot be narrowly dated, it is most natural to regard them as products of the century-long hegemony of Æthelbald (r. 716–57) and Offa (r. 757–96). Certainly, that period is likelier to have witnessed the cultivation of a Mercian prose tradition than periods where power and learning in the region had been decimated (2010a: 71–9).

The intellectual force behind Fulk's work on the dating of poetry and prose is the philological conviction that accurate treatment of an extant text requires informed conjecture about its composition and transmission. As Fulk remarked in the methodological introduction to *A History of Old English Meter*, the positivistic desire to eliminate conjecture from scholarship surrenders the possibility of accuracy for the certainty of error (1992: 18). Treating a classical Latin work as a ninth-century composition merely because its earliest witness is a Carolingian manuscript guarantees a gross distortion of linguistic and literary history. What licenses this dubious practice in Anglo-Saxon studies is the false binary that positivists have erected between certain and uncertain knowledge: the date of a manuscript is considered to be certain, while the date of composition is regarded as a matter of paralyzing uncertainty. In his brilliant methodological treatise "On Argumentation" (2003), Fulk demonstrated the illogic of this epistemological paradigm, contending that relative probability, not absolute certainty, must be the criterion for validation in philological research. Fulk also expounded his views on probabilism in a series of illuminating essays on textual criticism, which emphasize the need for reasoned conjecture in the editing of medieval works and expose the contradictions inherent in textual conservatism (1996b, 1997b, 2004b, 2007b). Conjectural emendation is a rational response to indications of textual corruption, whereas the refusal to emend obscures history and denies the material realities of manual reproduction.

A claim that recurs throughout Fulk's writings on textual criticism is that theory must not supplant practice. In earlier scholarship, "the debate over textual emendation was waged vicariously in the form of editions themselves" (1997b: 43), whereas recent decades have witnessed the proliferation of theoretical manifestos that aim to prescribe editorial practice. Fulk is a forthright critic of this trend:

Enunciating larger principles of textual editing is perhaps more gratifying; it is certainly more congenial to literary studies as they are now practised. But the temptation to develop larger editorial principles in a textual vacuum should be avoided: it is only in the act of editing that the issues which should determine those principles come into sharp focus (2007b: 153).

Fulk's prodigious editorial output leaves no doubt that he practices what he preaches. Perhaps his most celebrated achievement in this realm is his herculean revision of *Klaeber's Beowulf* (2008), which has become the standard edition of the poem cited in professional scholarship. This book won the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists' 2009 Award for Best Edition, an honor that Fulk earned a second time in 2013 for co-editing *The Old English Canons of Theodore* (2012) with Stefan Jurasinski. Further accolades may follow the publication of Fulk's critical edition (currently in preparation) of a collection of hitherto unpublished Old English anonymous homilies. Another extraordinary editorial feat is Fulk's contribution of hundreds of pages of skaldic verse to the monumental *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* project (Whaley 2013). Editorial competence beyond the domain of Old English is likewise evinced in Fulk's preparation of an anthology for his *Introduction to Middle English: Grammar • Texts* (2012a). And the editorial labor informing Fulk's two major contributions to Old English pedagogy – his revision of Pope's *Eight Old English Poems* (2001) and his own *Introductory Grammar of Old English* (2014a) – should not be underestimated. A laudable feature of these pedagogical resources is that they do not shelter students from philology, but introduce them to its achievements with learned textual commentary.

The confidence required to embrace such daunting editorial undertakings surely derived, to a large extent, from Fulk's mastery of Indo-European linguistics. Before he turned his attention to the editorial projects that appeared throughout the latter half of his career, Fulk made distinguished contributions to historical language study. In addition to a monograph on *The Origins of Indo-European Quantitative Ablaut* (1986), Fulk wrote articles on English and Welsh etymology (1978, 1979), Celtic phonology (1980), the evolution of the Germanic language family (1987a, 1988, 1993b), and numerous aspects of the history of the English language, including verb morphology (1993a), syllable structure (1997a, 1998b), open syllable lengthening (1996a), Anglo-Frisian sound change (1998a), and high vowel deletion (2010c). Detailed summary is not possible, but Fulk offered the following characterization of his linguistic work: "My contributions ... have mostly been devoted to examining the ways that phonology and morphology interact to produce change" (Grant 2014: 360). Other characteristic features of Fulk's linguistic scholarship are its philological concern

with the authenticity of the pertinent data (particularly evident in his reassessment of high vowel deletion) and its incorporation of insights derived from metrical scansion. Meter naturally informs discussion of syllable structure and sound change, but it is also the source of several morphological insights registered in *A Grammar of Old English*, Vol. II: *Morphology* (2011).¹ Originally conceived by the late Richard M. Hogg, Fulk brought this volume to completion after Hogg's death by revising his drafts and composing the chapters on verbs. The Hogg-Fulk grammar is now the authoritative standard in both linguistic and philological research.

Scholars immersed in editorial and linguistic scholarship tend to recuse themselves from questions of literary history and interpretation, but not Fulk, who is evidently a fearless polymath. With Christopher M. Cain, Fulk co-authored *A History of Old English Literature* (2002; 2nd ed. 2013), which is far more comprehensive in its coverage of texts and its bibliographical guidance than any preceding literary history. The book is easily the best available survey of the interpretive controversies generated by the corpus of Old English literature. For the student interested in *Beowulf* criticism in particular, though, Fulk's *Interpretations of Beowulf: A Critical Anthology* (1991) offers excellent guidance. Since translation is a form of continuous interpretation, it is fair to regard Fulk's translation of all of the texts in *The Beowulf Manuscript* (2010b) as one of his greatest interpretive works. On account of its immense philological authority, this translation is the first place to turn when wrestling with an interpretive crux in *Beowulf*. It is the culmination of Fulk's longstanding interest in understanding the poem, registered beforehand in lexical studies (2005a, 2005b) and in interpretive articles focusing on Unferth (1987b), Scyld Scefing (1989), Offa's queen (2004c), and *Beowulf* (2007a). Other significant interpretive works in Fulk's corpus include studies of morality in *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða* (1986–9), myth in the Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies (2002b), and homoeroticism in the *Canons of Theodore* (2004a). An article that only Fulk could have written is his synthesis of "Rhetoric, Form, and Linguistic Structure in Early Germanic Verse" (1996c), which explains stylistic differences between West Germanic and North Germanic poetry as consequences of their divergent language histories.

Some of Fulk's most remarkable achievements, however, are to be found in his contributions to the study of English historical metrics.

¹ In his *JEL* interview, Fulk commented on the relationship between metrical and linguistic studies, writing: "poetic meter is the best source of information we have about the prosody of languages no longer spoken, yielding information about stress, vowel quantity, syllable weight, and even the etymology of words of unknown derivation in the case of certain disyllabic stems that take monosyllabic scansion in Old English verse. For example, *symbol* 'feast' has been derived from *sumbil- or *sumil-, but because the word is usually to be scanned as monosyllabic in verse, *sumli is much likelier" (Grant 2014: 361).

In addition to its chronological arguments, *A History of Old English Meter* vindicated the metrical theory of Eduard Sievers (1893) in its discovery of the Rule of the Coda (i.e., Fulk's law) and its defense of ictus at the tertiary level. On several issues where Bliss and Sievers disagreed, Fulk demonstrated that Sievers' position is superior (see R.J. Pascual's essay in the present volume). Fulk also observed that the fact that Sieversian metrics permitted the detection of Kaluza's law – a linguistic regularity that is motivationally independent – provides firm confirmation that Sievers' views must be essentially correct (1992: 26–7). Conversely, any metrical system whose tenets obscure such regularities must fail to describe the principles of Old English verse construction (Pascual 2014: 809–11). Fulk elaborated this point in a particularly brilliant article where he adduced new evidence for the veracity of Sieversian metrics from the Early Middle English *Poema Morale* (2002a). Scansion of this work indicates that its author made use of the device known as resolution, wherein the placement of ictus on a light syllable absorbs the following syllable into a single metrical position. The discovery of resolution in *Poema Morale* offers stunning confirmation of Sieversian metrics, since Sievers postulated the existence of resolution as a metrical reality for the sole purpose of enabling his four-position analysis of Old English verse. Yet Fulk's demonstration of the actuality of resolution in early English metrics is only his most dramatic vindication of Sievers. Every chapter of *A History of Old English Meter* furnishes reasons to believe that Sievers is correct and that the edifice of knowledge erected upon his system possesses secure foundations.

Surveying Fulk's accomplishments, one cannot help but wonder how one man managed to generate such an impressive corpus of philological scholarship. Of course, his achievements would not be possible without immense natural gifts, tremendous energy, and a commitment to lifelong learning. But another *sine qua non* responsible for the extraordinary quality of Fulk's work is his clear-sighted conception of the scholarly enterprise. There are abundant indications in Fulk's writings that he regards scholarship as a cooperative effort to understand reality. For him, the purpose of scholarship is not the expression of individual subjectivity, but the generation of insights into common objects of study. This perspective distinguishes Fulk from many contemporary humanists, and it explains why co-authorship is a common phenomenon in his corpus. Fulk's willingness to co-author works where one author's contributions cannot readily be distinguished from another's (e.g., Pope-Fulk 2001, Fulk and Harris 2002, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008, Hogg and Fulk 2011, Fulk and Jurasinski 2012, Fulk and Cain 2013) indicates that his sole concern is the transmission and advancement of knowledge. If he regarded scholarship as an opportunity to offer insights into his mind and personality, these works would

never have been written. Their existence is the clearest sign that what motivates Fulk's work is the desire to contribute to a body of knowledge that is both progressive and impersonal. The conception of scholarship informing these works is noble, inspiring, and indispensable for reaching accurate conclusion about reality.

Fulk is a true Popperian, interested principally in the explanatory merits of hypotheses, not in the circumstances in which they were first generated. To Fulk, it does not matter whether an idea was conceived in the last year or the last century – all that matters is whether it possesses stronger claims to probability than its competitors. This conviction is apparent in Fulk's readiness to vindicate positions held by philologists during the nineteenth or early-twentieth century. Fulk's research is strikingly original, but the original dimensions of his work differ from the kinds of originality sought in much contemporary scholarship. For him, the discovery of new reasons to maintain older views constitutes a sufficiently original contribution. Fulk is far from the first scholar to argue that *Beowulf* is an archaic poem, but he is the first scholar to ascertain the most compelling linguistic reason for this conclusion. Much recent Old English scholarship, on the other hand, seeks to reach conclusions that no other human being ever previously reached (e.g., Kiernan 1981), but Fulk's concern with probability has protected his work from this vice. The desire to position oneself as the unique possessor of insights that overturn an entire research tradition is obviously incompatible with Fulk's understanding of scholarship as a cooperative and collaborative enterprise. There is wise humility in Fulk's work, in its recognition that at some point in the past two centuries of scholarship, some predecessor is likely to have hit upon the truth. Strengthening that scholar's position with new evidence or argumentation is a more meaningful contribution to knowledge than propounding wholly original views that are manifestly improbable.

The state of Old English philology has changed enormously on account of Fulk's manifold contributions. In the 1980s, in the aftermath of Amos (1980) and similar works, there was widespread skepticism about the reliability of philological methods, with the result that continuity with the earlier philological tradition appeared undesirable to many. A sense developed that conclusions reached in technical studies about the composition or transmission of a work could be dismissed as mere possibilities with no greater claims to probability than an untrained individual's speculations. With the prestige of the philological disciplines on the wane, the production of research vitiated by anachronism and ethnocentrism proliferated. The emergence of Fulk, signaled most dramatically by the publication of *A History of Old English Meter*, did much to reverse this trend and improve both the credibility and viability of philological scholarship. His work did more than change minds – it brought about something of a renaissance,

inspiring junior scholars to become philologists and rousing senior scholars to return to technical questions that seemed settled. Thanks to Fulk, the philological knowledge available to contemporary scholars vastly exceeds what was available in earlier generations. His linguistic and metrical work opened doors for much further research, and his editorial and pedagogical work provides the next generation with the tools required to undertake that research. The future of the discipline is brighter as a result of his labors.

The present volume is a testament to Fulk's extraordinary influence. It demonstrates the current vitality of the technical disciplines encompassed by philology, including metrics, phonology, morphology, syntax, etymology, lexicology, orthography, and textual criticism. The following essays also illustrate the essential role that philological knowledge plays when addressing questions of literary history and interpretation. Because Fulk's work revolutionized the contemporary study of Old English poetry, many of this book's authors contributed studies of individual poems, including *Beowulf*, *Andreas*, *Genesis A*, *Fortunes of Men*, and *Dream of the Rood*. The editors believe it would be a fitting tribute to Fulk if a volume in his honor were to become essential reading for students of Old English poetry. Yet the deeper purpose of this book is to pay tribute to a scholar whom many regard, with good reason, as the greatest philologist of the past century. Few scholars in the history of the discipline have generated bodies of work comparable to Fulk's, and his achievements demand recognition. In subsequent centuries, his name is sure to join the pantheon of great philological authorities alongside those of Sievers, Luick, and Klaeber. When admiring the monuments of Old English philology, *eald enta geweorc*, one often wishes to express gratitude to their authors personally. For the giants of yesteryear, this is no longer possible, but for the giant who still roams among us, this book is the field's way of saying thanks.

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Sievers, Bliss, Fulk, and Old English Metrical Theory

Rafael J. Pascual

Much of *A History of Old English Meter* (Fulk 1992) is concerned with chronological questions, and it is matters of chronology that have elicited the most fervent responses from critics and admirers alike. What has often been overlooked in its aftermath is the critical reassessment of Old English metrical theory that *A History of Old English Meter* also contains. In the introduction, for example, Fulk observed that the *Beowulf* poet's compliance with Kaluza's law provides firm indication that Sievers' positional analysis of Old English meter is essentially correct (1992: §§26, 65, 69).¹ Moreover, in chapter VII, in which he endeavored to gauge the chronological significance of the variable metrical behaviour of so-called tertiary stress, Fulk detected a regularity that led him to conclude that syllable quantity is more integral to the formation of metrical ictus than phonological stress (1992: §260), thereby making a significant revision to traditional Sieversian metrics. This conclusion, in conjunction with some distributional evidence from a large corpus of Old English poetry, allowed Fulk to demonstrate that Bliss's scansional system (for which see Bliss 1962 and 1967), despite its widespread use in the profession, is in actuality incompatible with Sievers' and therefore fundamentally erroneous.

This crucial aspect of *A History of Old English Meter*, however, has either passed unnoticed or been misunderstood by the majority of Old English scholars. In one of the most visible elementary essays on *Beowulfian* meter, for instance, Robert P. Stockwell and Donka Minkova describe Fulk's work as "a triumph of the Sievers-Bliss-Cable tradition" (1997: 58), a statement that is not quite accurate in the light of Fulk's conclusions about metrical theory.² A.J. Bliss cannot be regarded as the successor to Eduard Sievers if, as Fulk demonstrated, it is precisely Bliss's departures from Sievers that constitute the main

¹ For the formulation of the four-position principle, see Sievers 1893: §8; for an explanation of its psychological plausibility, see Cable 1974: 84-93 and Fulk 2002: 337-9.

² For a similar assessment, see also Bredehoft (2005: 7), who wrongly states that "Fulk adopts Bliss's scansion system wholesale."

flaws of Blissian metrics. Consequently, although it is fair to say that Fulk's work is a victory of Sievers, it is paradoxical to consider it also a triumph of Bliss. One factor that underlies the scholarly community's failure to apprehend Fulk's views on Old English metrical theory is the fact that *A History of Old English Meter*, in part because of its title, has been taken to be a chronological study exclusively, and hence its theoretical component has been relegated to a second place. Another probable factor is the linguistic complexity inherent in Fulk's theoretical discussion, which, despite the admirable clarity of his style, has rendered his conclusions inaccessible to some.³ Therefore, the aim of this essay is to explain in what ways Fulk has demonstrated Sievers' metrical theory to be superior to Bliss's,⁴ in the hope that the view that Blissian metrics constitutes a continuation of Sievers will be abandoned.

One reason for the general currency of the notion that Sievers' and Bliss's analyses form a harmonious, unitary interpretation of Old English meter is that Bliss himself called his work "a triumphant vindication of Sievers" (1967: v). The clearest sign of continuity with Sievers is Bliss's incorporation of the well-known five basic verse types into his metrical theory. As E.G. Stanley pointed out in his penetrating review of *The Metre of Beowulf*, however, Bliss clung to Sievers' verse notation only for reasons of practicality (1963: 49). Thus, although his conclusions were to a large extent at odds with Sievers', the five-type verse catalogue was so entrenched in the minds of Anglo-Saxonists that Bliss knew that this particular element of Sieversian metrics had to be retained in order for his theory to be accepted. Stanley, crediting Bliss's innovations, put it this way in his review:

Bliss, who is aware of his readers' dependence on Sievers, is not courageous enough to break with a system he has shown to be fundamentally faulty. As a result he encumbers the clear lines of his own system with debris saved from the wreckage of Sievers'. In his eagerness to make us accept a new system he tries to cajole us into thinking that we are still clutching to the old (1963: 49).

³ Thomas A. Bredehoft's remarks are perhaps revealing: "When I have told other medievalists, for example, that I was embarking on a project on Old English metre, more than one has asked me, 'So have you actually read Fulk's *A History of Old English Meter*?' as if merely reading it, to say nothing of reading it critically, were itself a monumental accomplishment" (2005: 4; see also 126, n. 16). Bredehoft argues that the complexity of Fulk's book is a sign of the unreliability of traditional metrics. For a detailed refutation of Bredehoft's argument, see Pascual 2014: 806–11.

⁴ Remarkably, some of the non-Sieversian features that Bliss proposed in *The Metre of Beowulf* had already been advanced by Erich Neuner in his 1920 doctoral dissertation *Ueber ein- und dreihellige Halbverse in der altenglischen alliterierenden Poesie*. His theoretical innovations were heavily criticized by James W. Bright in an incisive review of Neuner's work (1921).

When Stanley made the claim that Bliss had refuted Sievers' system, he was probably thinking of Bliss's rejection of Sievers' distinction between tertiary stress and absence of stress (Bliss 1967: §92), since it is this equation of tertiary stress with no stress that furnishes the basis for most of the unorthodox features of Bliss's metrical formalism. These include his theory of light verses, his theory of the caesura, and his acceptance of three-position verses, all of which are excluded from a Sieversian framework. As will be seen below, Fulk not only demonstrated all of these features of Blissian metrics to lack a sufficient empirical basis, but also corroborated Sievers' analysis beyond reasonable doubt.

A major point on which Sievers' and Bliss's theories differ is the analysis of verses like *Beowulf* 2888b, *syððan æþelingas*,⁵ which contain a single stress-word.⁶ According to Sieversian metrics, the structure of such verses is identical to that of verses like 11b, *þæt wæs gōd cyning*, with two stress-words. Since both must be scanned as standard type C verses, each of them is assumed to contain two clashing lifts. In l. 2888b, it is the medial long syllable *-ling-* that must furnish the second lift,⁷ as a result of which it is believed to receive tertiary stress (Sievers 1893: §8.2.). The central motivation for this two-lift analysis of *syððan æþelingas* is that type A3 verses, which unambiguously contain a single lift,⁸ are excluded from the off-verse (see, for example, Sievers 1893: §16.I.1.c). This regularity led Sievers to conclude that, regardless of its number of stress-words, a verse that occurs in the second half of the

⁵ All the verses from *Beowulf* are from Klaeber's fourth edition (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008), henceforth cited as *Klaeber IV*.

⁶ Stress-words, as opposed to particles and proclitics, are those lexical items that, by virtue of their high semantic import, always receive both prosodic stress in the ordinary language and metrical ictus in verse. They include nouns, adjectives, non-finite verbs, and polysyllabic adverbs. On the metrical behavior of stress-words, particles, and proclitics, see Kuhn 1933 and Pascual 2015.

⁷ It is important to note that, whereas a single postvocalic consonant suffices to make a stressed syllable long, unstressed syllables are short unless they contain two postvocalic consonants. For example, the noun *col*, "coal," constitutes a long syllable, but the second syllable of the adjective *swicol*, "deceitful," is short. The rationale behind this behavioral difference is that quantitative distinctions among syllables are not as clear in the absence of stress as under stressed conditions (see Fulk 1992: §264 and n. 104; 1995: 495). Thus, the consonantal material in the coda of an unstressed syllable must be particularly heavy in order for that syllable to be perceived as long by speakers of the language.

⁸ The traditional view is that type A3 verses are two-lift verses with reversed alliteration, but this interpretation is incompatible with Geoffrey Russom's hierarchy of metrical prominence (Russom 1987: 71–3; 1998: 64–86; Terasawa 2011: 19–21), according to which alliteration is systematically assigned to the first of two lifts. In this essay, therefore, A3 verses are conceived of as containing only one full lift. Perhaps this verse type was formed on the analogy of standard four-position on-verses with ornamental alliteration. Poets might have compensated for the excessive weight of a non-ictic and yet alliterating finite verb at the beginning of a type B or C verse by eliminating the second ictic position from its coda, thereby giving rise to type A3. On non-ictic, ornamental alliteration, see Bliss 1967: §20; Pascual 2015; and Mark Griffith's contribution to the present volume.

line must contain two lifts. Bliss, by contrast, did not consider the distributional restriction on type A3 verses compelling enough to assign two metrical stresses to a single stress-word like *æpelingas*. Instead, he classified the off-verse *syððan æpelingas* as light – that is, as a verse with only one lift – thereby allowing one-lift verses in the second half-line. In order to justify this radical departure from Sieversian metrics, Bliss offered some statistical evidence: while normal type C verses with two stress-words are frequent in the off-verse, Sieversian type C verses with one stress-word are much more regular in the on-verse; and while double alliteration tends to appear in on-verses with two stress words, in one-stress-word on-verses it is very rare (1967: §70). Bliss maintained that these differences corroborate that a verse like *syððan æpelingas*, on account of its single stress-word, belongs to a different structural category than a verse with two stress-words like *þæt wæs gōd cyning*.

Although Bliss's evidence might seem strong at first, Fulk demonstrated that it does not support his interpretation of verses like *syððan æpelingas* (1992: §§200–1). The low incidence of double alliteration in verses consisting of one stress-word is devoid of metrical significance, as the Old English language is not well-supplied with single words with internal alliteration. Furthermore, because the syntax of the on-verse is different from that of the off-verse, the higher incidence of verses with one stress-word in the first half-line cannot be unquestionably attributed to meter. In other words, Bliss's evidence confirms the existence of linguistic differences between the two verse types, but it fails to disprove Sievers' interpretation that both *syððan æpelingas* and *þæt wæs gōd cyning* present the same metrical configuration. In fact, as Fulk pointed out (1992: §202), Bliss simply ignored the strongest argument in favor of Sievers' assignment of metrical ictus to *-ling-* in *syððan æpelingas*, namely that verses that unambiguously contain one lift are excluded from the second half-line. The incompatibility of Bliss's theory of light verses with such an incontrovertible distributional fact can only be taken as a sign of its unreliability. By exposing the descriptive insufficiency of this basic tenet of Bliss's system, Fulk corroborated the superiority of Sievers' competing interpretation of verses like *syððan æpelingas*, thereby putting Sieversian metrical theory on a firmer empirical footing.

Why did Bliss ignore the metrical evidence in support of ictus on the medial syllable of *æpelingas*? The main reason is that he found no evidence for the existence of tertiary stress in the phonology of Old English (1967: App. A). Although Bliss's unwillingness to admit the reality of this phonological entity lies behind his mistaken interpretation of verses like *syððan æpelingas*, it still draws attention to a serious deficiency in traditional Sieversian metrics. Sievers took it for granted that the sole linguistic reality to which metrical ictus correlates

is phonological stress. Such an assumption led him to deduce not only that an off-verse like *syððan æþelingas* features two metrical lifts, but also that both lifts are realized by phonological stress. Since this equation of ictus with stress was tacitly assumed by Bliss, his rejection of phonological stress on *-ling-* implied the rejection of metrical ictus. The logical consequence of this chain of assumptions is that Bliss had no other choice but to ignore the metrical evidence and classify off-verses like *syððan æþelingas* as light. In *A History of Old English Meter*, however, Fulk discovered a regularity that allowed him to conclude that Sievers was right to assume ictus on *-ling-*, but wrong to identify that ictus with stress. Had Bliss apprehended the regularity detected by Fulk, it is not improbable that he would never have devised his theory of light verses.

Fulk examined the metrical behavior of word-medial syllables, which are traditionally believed to receive tertiary stress,⁹ in a large corpus of Old English poetry (1992: §§221–45). He found that, while long medial syllables are always ictic, the behavior of short medial syllables is governed by their position within the verse. For example, the long medial syllable *-ling-* must be ictic both in *Beowulf* 2888b, *syððan æþelingas*, and in 33b, *æþelinges fær*, since **xx / xx* and **/ xx /* are not acceptable metrical structures.¹⁰ Short medial syllables, on the other hand, demand ictus only in the coda of the verse, not in the onset. For instance, in *Beowulf* 2897b, *Lȳt swīgode*, the short syllable *-god-* must be ictic, but it must be scanned as non-ictic in 1699b, *swīgedon ealle*, because the non-four-position configurations **/ / xx* and **/ \ x / x* are disallowed. In the classical poems analyzed by Fulk, there is, as a rule, neither a long medial syllable without ictus nor a short medial syllable that demands ictus in the onset (1992: §§238, 260). This means that the regular behavior of medial syllables can be explained by reference to syllable quantity alone: if long, they are ictic; if short, they are either ictic or non-ictic depending on their position within the verse. The governing role that syllable quantity plays at the tertiary level, which was first identified by Fulk, has significant implications for Old English metrical theory.

As can be seen, the phonological concept of tertiary stress is not required to explain the metrical behavior of medial syllables, which can mean only that tertiary stress is irrelevant to the formation of ictus at the tertiary level. It follows that the linguistic correlate of such an ictus is not tertiary stress, as Sievers assumed, but syllable quantity

⁹ This is the standard view, as laid out by Alistair Campbell (1959: §§88–90). Campbell does not distinguish between tertiary and secondary stress, but refers to both as “half-stress,” a term that translates German *Nebenton*. On the convenience of using the expression “tertiary stress” to refer to all the instances of half-stress that are not secondary, see Fulk 1992: §186.

¹⁰ On the unmetricality of catalectic patterns like these, see, for example, Sievers 1893: §§10.1, 180; Fulk 1992: §209; 1996: 5–6; Terasawa 2011: 49–52; and Pascual 2013–14.

(Fulk 1992: §260).¹¹ It seems that Sievers, like the majority of metrists who preceded him, never entertained the possibility that the linguistic realization of metrical ictus can be anything other than phonological stress. This assumption led him to confuse evidence for metrical ictus with evidence for tertiary stress.¹² Acting on the same assumption, Bliss decided to ignore the evidence for ictus, since he thought that it meant the acceptance of stress on a syllable like *-ling-*, which the phonological evidence disallows. Fulk found the solution to the problem: since ictus at the tertiary level is predicated on syllable quantity, it is possible both to avoid crediting a phonologically implausible hypothesis and simultaneously not to ignore the positive evidence for metrical ictus. Thus, in the off-verse *syððan æþelingas*, the sole factor responsible for the presence of ictus on the long medial syllable *-ling-* is its quantity. Awareness of this dissociation of metrical ictus from phonological stress would have made it unnecessary for Bliss to admit the presence of one-lift verses in the second half-line.

Even though Fulk's investigation into the linguistic realization of metrical ictus has earned little notice, its significance for metrical theory is profound. In addition to the conclusion that tertiary ictus correlates with syllable quantity, he found that, as Max Kaluza first suggested (1896), syllable quantity is the factor that governs the formation of ictus under secondary stress. For example, in a pair of verses like *Beowulf* 2357a, *fr̥zawine folca*, and 2042a, *eald æscwiga*, it is the etymological quantity of the inflectional suffixes *-e* and *-a* that determines whether the secondary ictus is borne by either one or two syllables.¹³

¹¹ This is not to say, however, that tertiary stress is not a reality of the Old English language, as Bliss believed. Fulk (1992: §§187–97) convincingly argued that the vocalism of certain derivational suffixes of some recognizable semantic import, like *-dom*, *-leas*, *-fæst*, and *-hwylc*, among a few others, indicates that they receive tertiary stress. In their otherwise praising review of *A History of Old English Meter*, Minkova and Stockwell raised the criticism that the notion of secondary stress is sufficient to account for the vocalism of those suffixes. As they put it, “there is no reason or justification for considering these suffixes to be different from the second elements of compounds” (1995: 365). In a similar vein, Bredehoft states that “Fulk fails to consider the very real possibility that [...] such words may well have had secondary stress on these elements” (2005: 126, n. 14). The occurrence of verses like, for example, *Beowulf* 2233b, *gumena nāthwylc*, in which the word containing the pertinent suffix does not alliterate, demonstrates this criticism of Fulk's analysis to be untenable, because true compounds with secondary stress ought to alliterate, as is required by Krackow's law (see Krackow 1903: 43–4).

¹² This confusion was inherited by Campbell, who based his account of Old English half-stress solely on Sievers' evidence for metrical ictus (1959: §§88–91). Thus, Fulk's redefinition of tertiary ictus also rectified, incidentally, the standard account of tertiary stress: apart from derivational suffixes like *-lēas*, which truly receive tertiary stress, all other derivational and inflectional suffixes are unstressed. Their ability to bear metrical ictus depends only on their quantity.

¹³ Since the nominative singular ending of masculine *i*-stems like *wine* was short in Pre-Old English (*-i, from Proto-Germanic *-iz; see Fulk 1992: 421; and Hogg and Fulk 2011: §2.60), the syllable *-ne* is etymologically short. This enables *-ne* to resolve with the preceding syllable, *wi-*, as a result of which *-wine* occupies a single metrical position. By contrast,

The results of Fulk's investigation make it clear that metrists had magnified, and continue to magnify, the metrical significance of phonological stress. The rationale behind such magnification is the active part of primary stress in the formation of ictus, which led many scholars, including Sievers, to the superficial conclusion that ictus must be equated with stress. But even primary stress, despite its important metrical function, is not the only linguistic agent responsible for the formation of primary ictus, inasmuch as syllables under primary stress, as a rule, must be long in order to be ictic. Since Fulk demonstrated that syllable quantity is the only linguistic entity that mediates the establishment of all the levels of ictus, the widespread belief among Old English scholars that stress is the essential correlate of ictus should be abandoned. Indeed, Fulk's reconsideration of the traditional notion of ictus disclosed the previously unnoticed affinity between Old English verse and other Indo-European metrical systems in which syllable quantity performs a comparable function (1992: §268).

Fulk's revision to Sieversian metrics might seem to face an obstacle: while the composition of verses like **æþelingas bearnum* was avoided by Old English poets, verses like *Beowulf* 1815a, *æþeling tō yppan*, with a long final syllable after the first lift, do occur in the surviving poetry. It appears that syllable quantity alone fails to account for the difference in metricality between these two verses, since in each of them the same long syllable evinces a distinct metrical behaviour. It would be unreasonable to credit the traditional view that *-ling* receives tertiary stress only if inflected (Campbell 1959: §89), since the phonological evidence does not support this analysis (Fulk 1992: §§261–3). In order to account for the different acceptability of the two verse types, Bliss, who denied the existence of tertiary stress, designed a theoretical artefact that he called "caesura" (1967: §§41–5). He defined it as the pause that divides the linguistic material of a verse into smaller syntactic units or "breath groups." In *æþeling tō yppan*, the caesura, which divides it into two breath groups, *æþeling* and *tō yppan*, falls in position (iii). In **æþelingas bearnum*, on the other hand, it falls in a different position. It is the different placement of the caesura, Bliss maintained, that explains the distinction in metrical acceptability (1967: §43). Fulk pointed out that verses like *æþeling tō yppan* occur too infrequently to pose a real problem to his redefinition of tertiary ictus (1992: §264), a conclusion that at the same time demonstrated Bliss's theory of the caesura to be irrelevant to such a distinction.

the Pre-Old English nominative singular ending of masculine *n*-stems like *wiga* was long (*-ō, from Proto-Germanic *-ō; see Fulk 1992: 422–3; and Hogg and Fulk 2011: §§2.84–5). The etymological length of *-ga* suspends resolution of *wiga*, which therefore fills two distinct metrical positions. As Fulk demonstrated (1992: §§271–89), quantity also determines resolvability in verse-internal position. For example in *Beowulf* 2382b, *sæcýninga*, resolution of *-cýning-* is suspended because *-ning-* is long.

Apart from verses containing proper names, like *Beowulf* 2434a, *Herebeald ond Hæðcyn*, for which some attenuation of the metrical rules is to be expected,¹⁴ there is in fact only one other pertinent verse in *Beowulf*, l. 2506a, *æpeling on elne*. The extreme rarity of this type of verse contrasts with the high incidence of words like *æpeling* in the lexicon of Old English. These include, among others, nouns ending in suffixes like *-ung*, *-ing*, and *-end*; adjectives in *-isc*; and superlatives in *-est* and *-ost*. Given this abundant supply, Fulk argued (1992: §264), it is clear that there must have been a stricture against a word-final long syllable after the first lift of the verse, since otherwise Old English poets would have generated a larger number of verses like *æpeling tō yppan*. Because the phonology does not support the presence of tertiary stress on syllables like *-ling*, it must be concluded that the placement of such syllables after the first lift was prohibited on account of the systematic presence of ictus on long medial syllables. That is to say, owing to the ictic nature of long medial syllables, it would have been difficult for the audience to scan a long final syllable as non-ictic. As a result, in order to avoid scansional ambiguity, poets excluded long final syllables from non-ictic metrical positions. The verses *æpeling tō yppan* and *æpeling on elne* are therefore better regarded as two marginal exceptions to an otherwise strict rule. Fulk also contended that the rarity of the type voids Bliss's theory of the caesura of explanatory power (1992: 192 n. 41). If a long syllable is prohibited only in verse like **æpelingas bearnum*, there is no reason why Old English poets should have refrained from the composition of verses like *æpeling tō yppan*, where the caesura falls in position (iii). It is thus reasonable to concur with Fulk that, to the extent that the caesura is a theoretical entity designed to account for only two exceptional verses, it must be considered empirically untenable.¹⁵

Fulk showed Bliss's theory of the caesura to be unreliable for yet another reason, namely that it demands resolution of a suffix like *-scipe* in a verse such as *Beowulf* 1727a, *eard ond eorlscipe*. According to Bliss, in expanded type D* verses, the caesura must fall immediately before the second lift (1967: §44). Since the caesura falls in a different position

¹⁴ In *Widsið*, for example, which abounds in proper names, the metrical rules are generally slackened in order to accommodate them. On this point, see Fulk 1992: §§235, 251, and 264.

¹⁵ Another reason for Bliss to insist on the metrical significance of the caesura is that variability in its position within the verse seems to correlate with the presence or absence of anacrusis in type A verses. Thus, when the caesura falls in position (i), immediately before the second lift, as in *Beowulf* 11a, *gomban gýldan*, anacrusis seems to be prohibited; by contrast, if it falls in position (ii), as in 1223b, *swā sæ bebūgeð*, anacrusis is frequent (1967: §43). As Fulk argued (1992: §248), however, the correlation that Bliss claimed to have identified is not real, because in verses like *swā sæ bebūgeð* it is the prefix *be-* that is extrametrical, as Donoghue demonstrated (1987). Thus, they should not be analyzed as anacrustic type A verses, but as special instances of type C.

in *eard ond eorlsceipe*,¹⁶ Bliss argued that this is not an expanded type D* verse, but a type 1A1 with resolution of the suffix (1967: §45). This interpretation is problematic for two reasons. First, *-sceipe* is in the coda, the location that favors a one-to-one correspondence between syllables and metrical positions. For example, as has been seen above, a short syllable that occurs in the coda of the verse receives ictus, thereby occupying a single metrical position. Disyllabic sequences governed by Kaluza's law in *Beowulf* evince the same behavior: the coda was reserved for only those sequences that the poet perceived as non-resolvable for phonological reasons, as in *eald æscwiga*, a type D verse in which verse-final *-wiga* occupies two metrical positions.¹⁷ This tendency of the coda to favor monosyllabic metrical positions, which is a feature common to all Indo-European poetic traditions,¹⁸ disallows Bliss's type 1A1 scansion for verses like *eard ond eorlsceipe*. Inasmuch as such an unlikely scansion is dictated by Bliss's theory of the caesura, this theory must be regarded as an unreliable tool for the analysis of Old English meter.

The improbability of Bliss's interpretation of *eard ond eorlsceipe* is also made apparent by the consideration that the application of resolution is restricted to stressed syllables, as Fulk has made clear (1995: 495). The rationale behind such a restricted application lies in the origin of resolution as a mechanism of prosodic compensation. Resolution first arose in the phonology of Northwest Germanic as a response to the lengthening of short final vowels in stressed monosyllables (Old Norse *þú*, Old English *þū*; cf. Gothic *þu*).¹⁹ This lengthening caused such a significant increase in the incidence of long stressed syllables that short stressed syllables, which remained only in word-internal position, came to be perceived as anomalous by speakers of the language. Resolution compensated for this anomaly by combining a short stressed syllable and its immediate unstressed successor into a phonological unit that was equivalent to a long stressed syllable. Since the final vowels of unstressed monosyllables escaped the lengthening,²⁰ however, the incidence of long unstressed syllables remained

¹⁶ The caesura falls immediately after the first lift: *eard | ond eorlsceipe*.

¹⁷ As seen above, resolution is suspended by the etymological length of the nominative singular ending of masculine *n*-stems, which derives from trimoric **-ô* in Proto-Germanic. Remarkably, disyllabic sequences like *-wiga*, which suspend resolution in compliance with Kaluza's law, are, as a rule, restricted to the coda of the verse. Thus, the application of Kaluza's law is subordinated to the rule that requires monosyllabic metrical positions in the coda (see Fulk 1992: §237; 1995).

¹⁸ On this characteristic of Indo-European metrics, also known as right justification, see Lotz 1972: 5; Hayes 1983: 373; and Foley 1985: 12.

¹⁹ For more on this sound change and its effects, see Luick 1914–40: §103; Minkova 2014: 70–1; and Gordon 1957: §53.

²⁰ The low degree of quantitative contrast among unstressed syllables is a factor here (see Fulk 1995: 495; Campbell 1959: 34, n. 4; and footnote 7 above).

stable. Consequently, unstressed short syllables never became anomalous, which rendered their subjection to resolution unnecessary. In *A History of Old English Meter*, Fulk demonstrated the suffix *-scipe* to be unstressed (1992: §261).²¹ Bliss's theory of the caesura is therefore linguistically implausible, as it demands resolution from *-sci-*, a word-internal syllable for which the phonological evidence suggests absence of stress.

Yet Bliss's theories of light verses and the caesura are neither the only nor even the most problematic aspects of his metrical system. His rejection of tertiary stress, along with his inherited assumption that stress is the sole correlate of ictus, was also responsible for Bliss's most profound deviation from traditional Sieversian metrics: the acceptance of verses consisting of less than four positions. This unconventional feature was also addressed by Fulk, who concluded that the empirical basis of Sievers' four-position principle is so solid that Bliss's challenge to its authority constitutes the most serious flaw of his formalism. According to Bliss's theory, a verse like *æpelinges fær*, to which Sievers would attribute the four-position structure of a standard type E, must be scanned as a type 3E1, the basic configuration of which is the three-position / x / pattern. That verses like *æpelinges fær* feature a three-position configuration is unlikely, however, since three-position verses with structures that are in no way susceptible of a four-position interpretation, like **æpeling gōd*, are absent from the records. More important, of the 118 occurrences of type 3E1 in *Beowulf* (Vickman 1990: 43), not a single one is realized by three syllables. If Bliss's type 3E1 truly consisted of the basic three-position structure / x /, as he maintained, one should expect to find a significant number of ideal trisyllabic realizations of that type, like **dryhten frōd* (Fulk 1992: §208).²² It is precisely this virtual absence of unambiguous ideal instances that made Sievers exclude three-position verses from his theoretical account of Old English meter.

Of course, the rationale behind Bliss's interpretation of *æpelinges fær* is the same rationale that motivated his admission of light verses in the second half-line: he was unwilling to accept the reality of tertiary stress. Since Bliss did not apprehend the ability of a long medial syllable like *-ling-* to bear ictus by exclusive virtue of its length, his rejection of tertiary stress also implied the structural reduction of a verse like *æpelinges fær* to three metrical positions. This major departure from Sieversian metrics required, like his theory of light verses, the support of compelling evidence. Such evidence, he believed, was furnished by

²¹ The failure of the unstressed /i/ of *-scipe* to lower to /e/ is due to the palatal nature of the preceding consonant, /j/, as Fulk indicates.

²² On the virtual absence of trisyllabic verses and its theoretical implications, see Pascual 2013–14: 65–7.

the group of verses that he classified as 2E1, as they seem to refute the distinction between tertiary ictus and absence of ictus on which the four-position principle is predicated. For example, in order for a verse like *æbelinges fær* to comply with that rule, the syllable *-ling-* must be assumed to bear tertiary ictus, which Sievers equated with tertiary stress. But in a type 2E1 verse like *Beowulf* 2150a, *lissa ġelong*, the position after the first lift contains an inflectional suffix for which the possibility of tertiary ictus (stress-based or otherwise) is non-existent. If type 2E1 verses consist of only three positions, as *lissa ġelong* appears to indicate, there is no reason why 3E1 verses like *æbelinges fær* should not also present a three-position configuration. This analysis, which seems to undermine the empirical validity of Sievers' requirement of four positions to the verse, would justify Bliss's rejection of tertiary stress in type 3E1 verses.

The problem with Bliss's type 2E1 is that, as Fulk demonstrated, it cannot be an authentic metrical category, because *lissa ġelong* is the only verse in *Beowulf* (of Bliss's total of twenty-two) that can be adduced as unambiguous evidence for the genuineness of that type. Thus, one verse that Bliss classed as a 2E1 type, l. 747b, *ræhte onġēan*, is in actuality a spurious manuscript reading whose source of corruption is well-known in text-critical scholarship.²³ Another three, ll. 845a, *nīða ofercumen*; 881a, *ēam his nefan*; and 954a, *dædum ġefremed*, are not unambiguous, as they might have an unresolved second lift – a superior analysis, in view of the preference of the coda for monosyllabic metrical positions.²⁴ They should not, as a result, be offered in support of the authenticity of a given verse type. In regard to seventeen of the remaining eighteen verses, Fulk detected a regularity that seems to have escaped Bliss's notice: unlike *lissa ġelong*, which contains an inflectional suffix after the first lift, they all evince a morpheme with a recognizable lexical meaning in second position. Two representative examples are ll. 396b, *Hrōðgār ġesēon*, and 1720b, *drēamlēas ġebād*. In the first verse, the second name element *-gār* is as much a lexical morpheme as the common noun *gār* in, for example, l. 1846b, *þæt ðe gār nymed*. Similarly, the meaning of the derivational suffix *-lēas* in *drēamlēas ġebād* coincides with the meaning of the adjective *lēas* in l. 850b,

²³ There is an erasure immediately before *ræhte*, which coincides with another erasure at exactly the same place on the following leaf (Zupitza 1959: 37). This means that something was spilt on the vellum before *ræhte*, thereby obscuring the words preceding it (see Pope 1966: 372; Fulk 1992: 209; and Pascual 2013–14: 63). The editors of *Klaeber IV* supply *he him*, which, apart from rectifying the positional deficiency of this verse, makes for better syntax and sense.

²⁴ Besides, it is not improbable that the *Beowulf* poet treated *ēam* as disyllabic, corresponding to Pre-Old English **ēa-am* (Pascual 2013–14: 59), since its contraction into a monosyllable took place at some point between the late seventh and the early eighth century (Campbell 1959: §235.2; Hogg 1992: §5.13), very close to the composition date of *Beowulf* (on which see, for example, Fulk 1992: 381–92; Neidorf 2014; and Neidorf and Pascual 2014).

siððan drēama lēas. The same holds true for all the pertinent syllables in the remaining fifteen instances of Bliss's type 2E1, which consist of either second name elements or derivational suffixes similar to *-lēas*, like *-lang* and *-hwylc*, among a few others. Since a speaker of Old English could identify the connection between the meanings of these particular derivational suffixes and those of their associated lexical morphemes without difficulty, Fulk classified them as "semi-lexical morphemes," in order to differentiate them from full lexical morphemes, on the one hand, and derivational suffixes without lexical meaning, on the other.

The incidence of inflectional morphemes in the Old English language is higher than that of semi-lexical morphemes. That is to say, words like *lissa*, which ends with the inflectional marker for genitive plural, outnumber words like *drēamlēas*, with a semi-lexical morpheme at the end. Thus, if type 2E1 truly permitted the presence of an inflectional suffix in its second metrical position, one would expect the number of verses like *drēamlēas ġebād* to be inferior to the number of verses like *lissa ġelong*. Yet the tendency is exactly the opposite in *Beowulf*, where the overwhelming majority of instances of Bliss's type 2E1 feature either a second name element or a semi-lexical morpheme in second position, as seen in the previous paragraph. The same is true of a larger corpus of Old English poetry: in a total of approximately 22,000 verses, Fulk found only thirteen occurrences of type 2E1, of which ten present a semi-lexical morpheme after the first lift (1992: §210). These empirical data confirm the existence of a metrical stricture against inflectional morphemes in the second position of Bliss's type 2E1. Since the distinctive feature of inflectional morphemes, from a metrical point of view, is their inability to bear ictus, the rationale for such a stricture must be that their presence would reduce the pertinent verses to three positions. This conclusion is corroborated by the capability of the second position in the verse to accommodate semi-lexical morphemes, whose preservation of stressed vocalism unambiguously shows them to be able to receive metrical ictus.²⁵

Thus, verses like *Hrōðgār ġesēon* and *drēamlēas ġebād*, with a second name element and a semi-lexical morpheme in second position, do not support Bliss's three-position interpretation of 3E1 verses like *æbelinges fær*. His scansion is predicated on the hypothesis that the absence of ictus from the second metrical position of type 2E1 – to which Bliss assigned the configuration / xx / – renders the ascription of tertiary ictus to the medial syllable of *æbelinges* unnecessary. That Bliss's hypothesis is untenable is made clear by the large number of type 2E1 verses whose second positions contain

²⁵ The tertiary stress received by these elements could be ignored *ad libitum* by the *Beowulf* poet, as the occurrence of verses like 356b, *þær Hrōðgār sæt*, indicates.

stressed linguistic entities, in conjunction with the virtual absence of unambiguously non-ictic syllables from that metrical location. Since its second position demands ictus, Bliss's type 2E1 is in actuality the standard four-position type E of Sieversian theory, / \ x /. The inauthenticity of type 2E1 vitiates the empirical support for Bliss's three-position scansion of 3E1 verses. Therefore, both 2E1 and 3E1 verses – *Hrōðgār ġesēon* and *drēamlēas ġebād*, on the one hand, and *æþelinges fær*, on the other – present the metrical structure of a Sieversian type E. The only difference is that, while the linguistic correlate of the ictus on the long medial syllable *-ling-* is its quantity, the ictus on the morphemes *-gār* and *-lēas* is realized by phonological stress. In regard to verses like *lissa ġelong*, which feature an unmistakable three-position configuration, their incidence in the corpus of evidence analyzed by Fulk is so insignificant – four instances in a total of approximately 28,364 verses – that they must be ascribed to scribal corruption (Fulk 1992: §211). And indeed, this is the conclusion reached by the majority of metrists (see, for example, Russom 1987: 117–18; Pascual 2013–14).

The essential correctness of Sievers' four-position analysis is corroborated, as Fulk has pointed out on a number of occasions, by the *Beowulf* poet's adherence to Kaluza's law.²⁶ In order to enable the regular application of his four-position principle, Sievers had to assume that the operation of resolution is variable. In a verse like *frēawine folca*, for example, the disyllabic sequence *-wine* must be resolved, since the verse would otherwise feature a five-position structure. The verse *eald æscwiga*, on the other hand, would present a three-position configuration if *-wiga* did not suspend resolution. Thus, Sievers' resolution is a theoretical device designed to regulate the number of metrical positions per verse. As early as 1896, just a few years after the publication of Sievers' main works on meter, Kaluza detected that there is in *Beowulf* a direct correlation between the variable operation of resolution and the etymological length of the second of the resolvable syllables: if it is short, like *-ne* in *wine*, resolution applies; otherwise resolution is suspended.²⁷ That Sievers' assumptions about resolution allowed Kaluza to detect a regularity that is itself independent from Sievers' system of scansion confirms that resolution, as conceived of by Sievers, is not merely an *ad hoc* artefact of his theory, but a reality of Old English verse. The reality of Sievers' notion of resolution implies the reality of the four-position principle, since Sievers posited the existence of resolution and its variable application for the sole purpose of ensuring that each verse contained no more and no less than four

²⁶ In addition to the references to *A History of Old English Meter* provided above, see, for instance, Fulk 1996: 6; 1997: 41–2; 2002: 339–40; 2007: 140.

²⁷ See footnote 13 above.

metrical positions, as seen above. Fulk's reasoning thus demonstrated the absolute superiority of Sievers' analysis over Bliss's.

Though its contributions to metrical theory must be abandoned, Bliss's *The Metre of Beowulf* will remain a valuable work, not least for its advocacy of the use of metrical criteria in the detection and correction of scribal errors (1967: §8). Nevertheless, in the light of Fulk's conclusions about his theory of light verses, his theory of the caesura, and his acceptance of three-position verses, Bliss's metrical theory should not be considered the vindication and continuation of Sievers that its author purported it to be. In his admirable *Old English Metre: An Introduction*, Jun Terasawa offers a comprehensive study of Sieversian metrics, which will no doubt contribute to its definite establishment as the pre-eminent method of scansion in the profession. Still, the preface to this book portrays Sievers' and Bliss's accounts as a single, uniform theory of Old English meter (2011: ix–xii), thus failing to indicate not only that Bliss differed from Sievers on a number of fundamental aspects, but also that, as Fulk demonstrated, Bliss's innovations are void of empirical sufficiency. Introductions like Terasawa's should therefore alert readers to the implausibility of Bliss's interpretation of verses like *syððan æþelingas, æþeling tō yppan*, and *æþelinges fær*. More important, in view of the correctness of Sievers' four-position principle, which Fulk also proved beyond reasonable doubt, general accounts of Old English meter must disallow Bliss's admission of verses like *ræhte onġēan* and *lissa ġelong*, since otherwise textual critics will be led to regard scribal corruptions as genuine authorial readings – a situation of which Bliss himself would have disapproved.

It is not improbable that, if Bliss had been aware of the dissociation of tertiary ictus from tertiary stress proposed by Fulk, his departures from Sieversian metrics would not have been so radical. This dissociation, along with its concomitant revaluation of the metrical role of syllable quantity, should likewise be acknowledged in future accounts of Old English versification, since it is essential to the correct understanding of the meter. As Fulk demonstrated, syllable quantity is a determining factor behind the formation of metrical ictus at the primary and secondary levels, and its sole linguistic correlate at the tertiary one. The connection between ictus and syllable quantity is corroborated by the behaviour of non-ictic metrical positions, which contain, as a rule, only short syllables, as the extreme rarity of verses like *æþeling tō yppan* suggests. Inasmuch as it is insufficient to account for the intricacies of Old English verse construction, the traditional description of Sievers' five basic verse types as patterns of stress should be abandoned. They are rather patterns of metrical ictus, for whose establishment syllable quantity plays a more pervasive role than phonological stress. Thus, Fulk's rectification of the traditional Sieversian equation between ictus and stress revealed that Old English meter is, in some fundamental

respects, more akin to the systems of versification of Classical Greek and Latin poetry than to those of later periods of English verse.

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Ictus as Stress or Length: The Effect of Tempo*

Thomas Cable

1. *The phonological and metrical correlates*

In an important section of *A History of Old English Meter*, R.D. Fulk points the way for a detailed analysis of specific patterns of Old English verse and the underlying principles of rhythm that rationalize those patterns: "Since before the time of Sievers the general assumption among metrists has been that the primary phonological correlate of ictus in Old English verse is stress. Syllable length plays a contributory role, inasmuch as short full lifts are exceptional; but otherwise the pattern of lifts, half-lifts, and drops in Sievers' five metrical types is determined solely on the basis of stress. ... Now it appears that syllable length plays a greater role than previously imagined ..." (1992: 223).

General handbook and anthology summaries of Old English meter usually fail to take up syllable length, even to the extent of noting its "contributory role." The most familiar rubrics give the game away: "accentual meter," "strong-stress meter." Textbooks for introductory language courses in Old English do indicate the role of syllable length in assigning metrical stress, but the student has to turn to technical books and articles to find that syllable length is an element not only of stress but also of something called a "position." (Pope-Fulk 2001: 149–50 is an exception in presenting the idea, and presenting it clearly.)

Even with the focus solely on stress (Fulk's reference to "lifts, half-lifts, and drops"), syllable length, or quantity, has a natural place, because metrical stress can occur only on a long syllable or its resolved equivalent. Therefore, at the very minimum, a bare-bones summary of Old English meter by the usual view must include both metrical stress (at three different levels) and syllable quantity.¹

* I am grateful to Natalie Gerber for the metrical expertise and keen editorial eye that she generously brought to a reading of this essay.

¹ "Syllable quantity" is a part of both the meter and the phonology of Old English. "Metrical stress," or "ictus," is a part of the meter. Attempts to extend metrical stress to the phonology of "half-stress," as by Campbell 1959: 34–5, are circular. See Fulk 1992: 226.

With so much going on in the meter, it is understandable that the “position” is often left out. Yet the position – as in four positions to the half-line – has arguably been the most important element of the metrical analysis of Old English verse during the past half century. Although it was a part of Sievers’ original system, the position was generally overlooked in favor of the Five Types for several decades.

Four positions are implicit in the simplest forms of Sievers’ Five Types, illustrated by four-syllable verses. Here are the usual stress contours, along with hypothesized intonational contours to which we’ll return momentarily:²

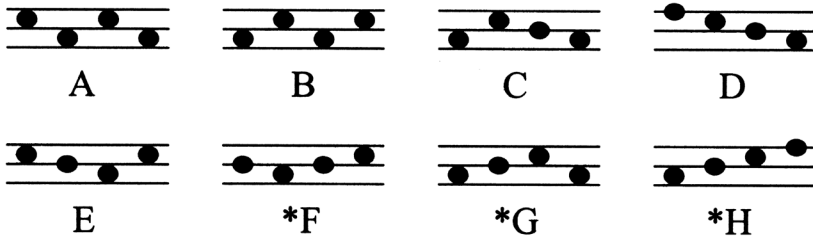


Figure 2.1: Eight logically possible alliterative verse contours

A	lange hwīle 'long while' (16a)	/ x / x	• • • •
B	ond hālig God 'and holy God' (1553b)	x / x /	• • • •
C	of brȳdbūre 'from bride-bower' (921a)	x / / x	• • • •
D	fylwēriġne 'fall-weary' (962b)	/ / \ x	• • • •
E	bānhringas bræc 'bone-rings broke' (1567a)	/ \ x /	• • • •

The contours have proved useful in showing the interaction of the abstract meter and the patterns of linguistic stress, and they suggest ways that Old English poetry may have been sung.³ Ironically, they also pose problems of perception, which they were originally posited to solve, as the next section explains.

² All examples of Old English verse are from *Beowulf* (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008). Most of the examples in this essay are half-lines. The first half-line (on-verse) is notated with “a,” the second half-line (off-verse) with “b,” following traditional usage.

³ See Cable 1974, chapters 7 and 8.

2. *A too-neat explanation*

The dual foundations of Eduard Sievers' clarifying system – the Five Types and the positions – were taken by prosodists of the following century in opposite directions: toward elaboration (the types) and simplicity (the positions). The catalogues of subtypes by John C. Pope (1st ed. 1942) and A.J. Bliss (1st ed. 1958) show the immense usefulness of elaboration, even as they move away from any normally understood notion of "meter."⁴

The revival of Sievers' idea of four (and occasionally five) positions in Cable 1974 emphasized that a poetic meter should be simple. Whatever its modulations and variations, and however long it takes a poet to master them, the essentials should be easily describable by an experienced poet to an apprentice. Cable 1974 showed that Sievers' Five Types could be derived from four positions defined by the transition from one position to the next (setting aside the five-position expanded type D*). Three transitions among four positions result in eight logically possible contours. Three of these contours have three consecutive rising levels of ictus and were disallowed (for reasons ultimately rooted in the phonology and morphology of Old English). The remaining five were the skeletal contours of Sievers' Five Types.

The problem with the eight logically inevitable contours was seen independently, and more or less simultaneously, by Fulk and the present author (Cable 1991, Fulk 1992). To define a "position" as a change of prominence from one unit to the next makes problematic assumptions about the key terms, "change" and "prominence." As for "prominence," the usual phonetic correlates in English are stress, pitch, and duration, often in shifting combinations. Their relationship, even in the phonetics of Modern English, remains a subject of debate and laboratory experiment. Fulk's revival of interest in syllable quantity, beginning with his 1989 MLA paper, made the relationship in Old English look even more vexed. It was not hard to imagine that actual tunes, as proposed in Cable 1974 and in subsequent articles, would override the more subtle values of syllable quantity.

At least they seem more subtle to speakers of Modern English. Maybe the Anglo-Saxons had an easier time of it, although R.H. Stetson, with reference to Classical Greek and Latin, satirized assumptions about "the delicate ear of the ancients" (1945: 71). In any event, empirical work on the mapping of levels of phonological stress onto levels of metrical ictus has revealed problems in the underlying assumptions. A major problem is that both sets of levels in Old English, the phonological and

⁴ For a valuable overview of the concept of metrical "positions" in older verse and new insights into comparative Germanic meters, see Suzuki 2014.

the metrical, are theories, inferred by modern prosodists, each set with reference to the other, so that a vicious circularity must be suspected.

Numerous syntactic patterns could serve as illustration. The weak verbs of class 2 are especially clear in the problems they present. Recent scholarship makes it implausible to say, as was said for a century after Sievers, that the second syllable of *wīsode* ‘guided’ received some kind of stress (and metrical ictus) that distinguished *-od-* from the following syllable, *-e*, resulting in the usual falling contour of type D: *secg wīsode*, ‘man guided’ / / \ x (with equal clashing stress) or / ^ \ x (with a continuous falling contour through four levels).

Rather, it is more plausible to say that *-od-* is distinguished from *-e* by virtue of simply being a syllable, as in Fulk’s Rule of the Coda (1992: 197–223). Thus, we have “rules” to describe why the last two syllables of *wīsode* can sometimes form one position and sometimes two positions. However, it would be more satisfying if these rules connected to general principles of rhythm. This is a subject to which we will turn, but first it will be helpful to have examples before us to keep in mind exactly what these principles need to explain.

3. The variable rhythm of the line

Verses such as the one just discussed, or *hlyn swynsode* ‘sound made’ (611b), with the last two syllables of the verb following a stress clash (type D), generally occur only in the second half-line. However, verses such as *beorhtode benčswēg* ‘sounded clearly bench noise’ (1161a), with the second two syllables of the verb occurring between two stresses (type A) occur freely in the first half-line:

/ / x x (second half-line)
hlyn swynsode

/ x x / \ (first half-line)
beorhtode benčswēg

These distributions seem to be related to other features of the line, including the definite tendency for the a-verse to be heavier than the b-verse – for example, the avoidance of type D verses with full secondary stress in the second half-line, verses such as *deorc dēaþscua* ‘dark death-shadow’ (160a).

Perhaps this general difference between the two halves of the line (and even the two halves of each half-line) may be a metrical crystallization of a tendency for there to be more force at the beginning of an utterance accompanied by a decrease in subglottal pressure, a relaxing of the vocal folds, and so on, over the course of a phrase.

A considerable body of scholarship on *downstep*, *downdrift*, and *declination* in both tonal and non-tonal languages may be relevant to the prevailing downward slope of ictus in the Old English line.⁵ For now, there are more clearly established perceptual qualities to consider – *stress-timing* and *syllable-timing*.

If the “positions” of Old English meter are to have any reality beyond the abstractions of prosodists, they should correspond in a straightforward way to ordinary elements of language that poets work with. The obvious starting point is the syllable itself. Could the correspondence be, for the simplest case, one syllable per position? There are many four-syllable hemistichs in Old English verse, for example:

1	2	3	4	
/	/	x	x	

fēond treddode ‘fiend stepped’ (725b)

However, because Old English verses often have more than four syllables – indeed, the expansion is one of the most familiar aspects of the poetry – there would have to be a provision for “four syllables or syllable-equivalents,” as in verse 922a, with five syllables:

1	2	3	4	
	^			
/	x	x	/	\

tryddode tīrfæst ‘stepped famous’ (922a)

While the last two syllables of *tryddode* each filled a position in verse 725b, here they must be gathered into a single position.

A logical way of thinking about it is that if *-dod-* and *-e* can sometimes fill separate positions and sometimes fill a single position, there is likely to be a difference in tempo between the two patterns.⁶ We can hypothesize that two unstressed syllables filling a single position between two stressed syllables, as in *tryddode tīrfæst*, will be pronounced more rapidly than two unstressed syllables at the end of the verse, where each syllable must count as a position: *fēond tred-dode*. The reasoning to this point is metrical, not phonological (though it ultimately depends on the phonology). It reflects what metrists have always said about a sequence of unstressed syllables between beats, both in “accentual-syllabic” and in “accentual” meters. Here is Attridge, for example: “It is, of course, the stress-timed rhythm of English, in co-operation with the regular verse form, which speeds up

⁵ For an overview of downstep, see Connell 2011. For parallels with Old English, see Suzuki 2014: 28.

⁶ The assumption of the division *tryd-dod-e* instead of *tryd-do-de* is explained below, §5.

the syllables when there are two nonstresses between beats, and slows them down when there is one."⁷

Attridge's reference to "the stress-timed rhythm of English" raises the most fundamental question of this essay: Are there general linguistic principles that would justify the hypothesized differential tempo in a verse of Old English?

4. Stress-timing and syllable-timing in Old English meter

As it happens, a famous taxonomy of the rhythms of the languages of the world has proved both immensely useful and endlessly debatable, and perhaps relevant for the problem before us. Ever since Pike 1945, which drew on earlier work by Daniel Jones, phonologists have tested the proposition of a major division into *stress-timed languages*, like English and German, and *syllable-timed languages*, like French and Italian.⁸ For a language to be *stress-timed*, there should be the *impression* of equal intervals between stresses regardless of the number of unstressed syllables, whereas for a language to be *syllable-timed*, there should be the impression of equal intervals between syllables.

Before elaborating aspects of this classification in modern languages, it is important to acknowledge that Old English is, of course, beyond our observation. In suggesting that Pike's twentieth-century classification is relevant, and later in this essay that De Jong's studies of tempo may also be relevant, the analogies are with a small slice of the full phonology. Specifically, a sequence of metrically unstressed syllables is taken as a unit, without division. In phonology, this is the essence of the idea "stress-timed language," the *sine qua non*. In literary metrics, it is safe to say that this is a widely accepted view of unstressed sequences at all stages of English, especially among "temporal" metrists.⁹

As for the differences between stress-timed and syllable-timed languages, there can be no doubt about the widely shared *impressions* of such differences. Even if the actual clocking of intervals, whether between stresses or between syllables, does not confirm isochrony, the impressions themselves are perceptual facts that require an explanation. References to "machine-gun" languages (syllable-timed, as with Spanish) and "Morse-code" languages (stress-timed, as with Dutch) capture the differences.

⁷ Attridge 1982: 99. See also Groves 1998: 67.

⁸ To these, the concept of *mora-timed languages*, like Japanese, has been added, but this can be set to the side.

⁹ It would be opposed by those who subscribe to the idea of an "inverted first foot" or combination of "trochee and iamb" in a line such as Alexander Pope's, "Mark how it mounts to Man's imperial race."

The question is one of cause. In the light of recent and ongoing experimental research, isochrony of one element or another seems to be a *result*, not an underlying principle. Instead of a requirement of isochrony at different levels for the different types of languages, it seems that phonological differences among the languages at the level of the syllable and below *cause* the impressionistic differences in isochrony. French, Spanish, and Italian have a higher proportion of CV syllables than Modern English, which has both heavier syllables and also a high proportion of reduced vowels. Both of these features contribute to the impression of Modern English as a stress-timed language.¹⁰

Nespor, Shukla, and Mehler (2011: 1151) state it succinctly: “That languages vary in their rhythm is a fact. However, from these studies it can be concluded that it is not different rhythms that trigger different phonological phenomena. Rather, different rhythms arise as a consequence of a series of independent phonological properties.”

The classic description by Pike (1945: 34) of stress-timed languages fits well with familiar, summary accounts of the internal rhythm of “accentual meter,” usually described as four stresses to the full line with an indeterminate number of unstressed syllables, a “gabble of weaker syllables”:

The tendency toward uniform spacing of stresses in material which has uneven numbers of syllables within its rhythm groups can be achieved only by destroying any possibility of even time spacing of syllables. Since the rhythm units have different numbers of syllables, but a similar time value, the syllables of the longer ones are crushed together, and pronounced very rapidly, in order to get them pronounced at all, within that time limitation. This rhythmic crushing of syllables into short time limits is partly responsible for many abbreviations ... and the obscuring of vowels; it implies, also, that English syllables are of different lengths, with their length of utterance controlled not only by the lexical phonetic characteristics of their sounds but also by the accident of the number of syllables in the particular rhythmic unit to which they happen to belong at that moment.

As noted above, research of recent years has tended to reverse cause and effect, or at least modulate the categorical emphasis: for example, reduced vowels are now seen as a cause of stress-timing rather than an effect.

¹⁰ See Nespor, Shukla, and Mehler 2011. For support of the distinction as non-categorical but as ranging along a continuum, see Grabe and Low 2002 and Low 2015. For a bracing skepticism of much earlier work, see Arvaniti 2012, which however does not negate the usefulness of the distinction here.

5. *Implications of stress-timing for modulating the Old English line*

Just as in ordinary speech, if the unstressed syllables of accentual verse are “crushed together” and “pronounced very rapidly,” one can expect other sound effects to flow from this faster tempo. In particular, there may be differences in syllable division between the slower and faster tempos.

As early as Stetson 1951, and as confirmed by recent laboratory study with better instrumentation, impressionistic and recorded observations of changes in syllable division as a result of changes in tempo have revealed patterns of interest for metrics. A repeated sequence of monosyllables such as /ib/ ‘eeb’ (*eeb eeb eeb* etc.) when spoken at a faster rate becomes /bi/ ‘bee’ (*bee bee bee* etc.) The consonant of the coda becomes the onset consonant at the faster rate.¹¹

In projecting findings in Modern English onto Old English, it is important to note that certain features at the earlier stage can be assessed with confidence from the manuscripts and the grammars derived from them: specifically, word stress, CV syllable structure, and the proportion of reduced vowels. These are the main causes of the impression of stress-timing, and their identification in English of any period is fairly straightforward. It is interesting, for all that has been said about the “Germanic” qualities of Old English, that Modern English is probably more “stress-timed” than Old English. As argued in Cable 1991 (30–7), the lack of reduced vowels in Old English, compared with their ubiquity in Modern English, probably moves Old English closer to the “syllable-timed” end of the continuum than Modern English. However, word stress and CVC syllable structure, along with empirical evidence from both phonology and meter, make Old English more stress-timed than, say, Modern Spanish.

In Old English poetry, the tempo of articulation has often been dismissed as a matter of “performance,” as in the present author’s overstated objections to John C. Pope’s system of measures (for example, Cable 1974: 13–17). However, tempo may be more than a matter of performance. It may be a structural feature of the verse. For example, tri-syllabic verbs of weak class 2 have proved difficult to incorporate into the standard description of Sievers’ Five Types. McCully and Hogg 1990 divide *timbrode* ‘he built’ as *tim-brod-e*. (This is the weak class 2 form of the verb, which is also conjugated as weak class 1.) Although there are different theories about whether the *-d-* is the coda of the

¹¹ These examples are from De Jong 2001, which repeated Stetson’s experiment and other experiments in the years after with a metronome to control the rate of pronunciation. The terms, *onset* and *coda*, when applied to syllables should not be confused with the same terms Fulk applies to the verse.

second syllable of the word or the onset of the third syllable, let us accept McCully and Hogg's division as the pronunciation at a normal or slow rate. The same would hold for the identical phonological structure of *tryddode*: *tryd-dod-e*. In verse 725b, *fēond treddode*, the requirement of one syllable per position is fairly unproblematic: both *tred-* and *-dod-* are closed, "long," syllables, and resolution is not a worry:

/ / x x
fēond tred-dod-e

The syllable *-dod-* can bear ictus and occupy a position, and the final syllable *-e-* can occupy a position by itself, as final syllables of Old English words often do.

At the faster tempo in *tryddode tīrfæst* (for reasons given in §3 above), let us posit resyllabification of *treddode* (from *tred-dod-e* to *tred-do-de*), in accord with the findings of De Jong 2001:

/ x x / \
tryd-do-de tīrfæst

Now there would be problems in assuming ictus on the medial short syllable of a trisyllabic word (*-do-*). Instead, the last two syllables of the word together can easily fill a single position, as in the scansion in §3 above for *tryddode tīrfæst*.

If we take McCully and Hogg's description of class 2 weak verbs as the shape at the normal rate (*tred-dod-e*), we can hypothesize differences in syllable division, and thus differences in meter and rhythm as the rate increases (*tred-do-de*). Specifically, proposed differences in the tempo of configurations of syllables within the Five Types match up with what we know about English as a stress-timed language and with the distributions of metrical patterns in the two halves of the line. The increased tempo is needed to fit unstressed syllables into a template of four positions. The template is an artifice. The increased speed, however, is not artificial; it is natural. Even without electronic equipment from the eighth-century mead hall, several hypotheses and facts of distribution converge in a suggestive way.

This analysis has similarities with analyses that posit "ambisyllabicity," which may seem a foolhardy tack given the problems with ambisyllabicity pointed out in Fulk 1997. However, there is an essential difference. Fulk and the studies he critiqued considered possible ambisyllabicity in the pattern of a *stressed* syllable followed by a single consonant and an unstressed syllable – for example, *scipa*. The question was whether *p* was the coda of the first syllable (*scip.a*) or the onset of the second (*sci.pa*). The question as framed here concerns two consecutive *unstressed* syllables – for example, the last two syllables of *treddode* or *swynsode*. The metrical distribution of this pattern in Old

English meter is frankly strange, and no metrical theory has given an adequate explanation. The speculative suggestions offered here are modest attempts to advance the discussion beyond Sievers' ad hoc imposition of an unlikely stress on the middle syllable of the word – *tréddðde*, *swýnsðde* – followed by Campbell 1959 and most introductions to Old English language and meter.

This alternative analysis with its consideration of tempo would help toward solving a problem in the distribution of two patterns of half-lines, though it must be acknowledged that the local effects over such a short span may have little resemblance to the repeated sequences in De Jong 2001. For one thing, the sequences *ebb*, *eeb*, *eeb* and *bee*, *bee*, *bee* may be assumed to have some kind of stress. However, as soon as “stress” is introduced into the picture, we realize that the vexed idea of stress is what has confounded our understanding from the beginning. Beyond the marking of word stress in a dictionary of Modern English, it is hard to say what stress is. The phonetic correlates of stress are not easy to sort out among their articulatory, perceptual, and acoustic manifestations. Throughout his career Dwight Bolinger argued for pitch as the primary correlate, as in Bolinger 1958. Since the classic essay by D.B. Fry in 1955, duration has been given priority by many, and that is probably the consensus among current phoneticians and phonologists. In addition, Anthony Fox (2000: 144ff., §3.4.2.1 “Level 1: Accent as Rhythm”) has summarized theories of how rhythm itself causes accent (rather than vice versa). These last two ideas are especially relevant for our problem.

Fulk's observations are to the point (1992: 228):

In a stress-based prosodic system it is conceivable that a syllable should lack phonological stress and still bear ictus. ... That short syllables like *-lic-* and *-od-* are phonologically unstressed, then, and yet bear ictus in the coda of the verse, tells against the supposition that ictus in the coda has anything to do with stress. The rule governing ictus in the coda of the verse, that is, the rule of the coda, in fact makes no reference to stress below the level of primary stress: the rule is simply that every syllable after the last full lift in the verse must bear ictus – regardless of length or stress. And of course since these short syllables normally bear no ictus in the onset – and thus stress plays no rule in their treatment in the onset, either – there is neither a phonological basis nor a metrical one for assigning any sort of stress at all to such short syllables, anywhere in the verse.

Fulk's close reasoning and command of the data lead him to a conclusion that radically simplifies our understanding of Old English meter. Although the evidence points to a distinction at the phonological level among four degrees of stress – primary, secondary, tertiary, and weak – these are reduced to two degrees at the metrical level: stress and no

stress.¹² Fulk's summary conclusion makes the older Germanic meters less anomalous than they have always seemed: "ictus at the tertiary level apparently amounts to syllable length, and secondary stress can be distinguished from primary on a purely positional basis: it is any full stress that immediately follows another full stress" (231).

Yet another question comes up in applying analogies from recent work such as De Jong's to Old English verse. Of the 234 occurrences of weak verbs of class 2 in their various forms in *Beowulf*, 96 are of the form *fēond treddode*, with a single consonant between the last two vowels [d]. In addition, there are 27 verses with adjacent vowels that pattern similarly. These are most often the infinitive in *-ian*, as in *feorh ealgian* 'life to protect' (2668a), but also the present plural in *-iað* and the present subjunctive in *-ie*.¹³ By either a fast reading or a slow reading, the middle syllable of *ealgian* will not be closed by a consonant that is indicated in the text.

For words like *ealgian*, experimental evidence for Modern English from Stetson to De Jong produces another feature that fits surprisingly with speculations about syllable structure in Old English. In Modern English, in addition to the shift of the consonant from coda to onset at the faster rate, there is also the loss, at the faster rate, of a glottal stop, which has been found to be present in Modern English at the slower rate but of course is not indicated in the writing system. (This is for sequences such as *eeb*, *eeb*, *ebb* becoming *bee*, *bee*, *bee*.)

Thus, for *ealgian*, there may be no written consonant between *-i-* and *-an*, but there may be a glottal stop at the normal or slow rate, which helps to give the syllables identity as positions [ɛl-gɪ-ʔən]. It is then lost at the faster rate [ɛl-gɪ-ən].¹⁴ As it happens, the hypothesis of a glottal stop before an ictus-bearing vowel-initial syllable has a long history in Old English scholarship, from Classen 1913 (and his predecessors) to Minkova 2003. In these studies, the aim has been to account for "vocalic alliteration" among stressed syllables with different vowels by showing that the alliteration is actually on a consonant, the glottal stop. It should be acknowledged that alliteration does not figure into the examples before us, and the question here is one of metrical ictus, not stress.

However stress might figure into this – whatever "stress" is – it is the distinctiveness of the syllable that is in question. Minkova thoroughly explores the possibility of the glottal stop in the traditional terms of stress. Following Fulk, the present, speculative discussion

¹² For a similar simplification to two levels, see Yakovlev 2008.

¹³ The vowels and syllables remain distinct. There is no glide formation of the high front vowel (metrical "synaeresis") as in weak class 1 verbs such as *herian* 'to praise'.

¹⁴ Glottal stops in Modern English are famous in Cockney pronunciations of words like *bottle*, but degrees of glottalization are found throughout varieties of present-day English.

casts the type of syllable as “ictus-bearing.” The point that is being suggested is simply that a glottal stop between the two vowels may help keep the syllables distinct enough to occupy two positions.

6. “Gabble of weaker syllables”

At this point, our explanation may seem to be reaching for any spare parts on the shelf. It will help to step back and consider *treddode* and *ealgian* in terms of a feature of Old English verse that is one of the most obvious to any casual reader. Yet it receives little attention from prosodists: the structure of “the gabble of weaker syllables.”¹⁵ What is it that allows a series of weakly stressed syllables to count as a single position? For example, four weakly stressed syllables are gathered into the first position of verse 2521b:

x x x x / x /..x
swā iċ gið wið Grendle dyde
‘so I earlier with Grendle did’

The two adverbs, the personal pronoun, and the preposition are all candidates for occupying a metrical position alone (as three of them do in other verses), and yet a main principle of Old English meter (and of stress-timed patterns generally) is that these stretches of unstressed syllables cannot be divided somewhere in the middle. They cannot be split into two consecutive “dips” – for example, between *iċ* and *gið*. What is it, then, that allows the lighter final two syllables of *tryddode* or *ealgian* to be assigned to different positions, not to mention the subjunctive third person singular of *fæðmian* in 2652b, *glēd fæðmie* ‘fire enfold’.

The answer must be that a trisyllabic word presents options of timing that monosyllables (and disyllabic function words) do not. Against the principle of stress-timing that the present analysis takes as a key assumption, the three syllables of *tryddode* can each occupy a position in certain contexts. Granted, to introduce the notion of “word” explicitly into a description of Old English meter complicates matters.

Yakovlev 2008 makes the valid point that Cable 1974 criticizes Bliss 1967 for admitting word boundaries to account for the “caesura” and then ingenuously and indirectly does the same thing to account for secondary stress. Although Cable 1974 attempted a Platonic phonological-metrical description of sound abstracted from the shape of words (linguistic rules presumably having done their work at the

¹⁵ The phrase is from Wimsatt and Beardsley’s description of Old and Middle English “strong-stress meter” in their enduring and endlessly provocative essay (1959: 592).

morphophonemic level), it may be that such a division of labor is not possible. Instead of renouncing the role of word shapes, as Yakovlev does in his “morphological meter,” it may be best to include them explicitly. This would turn a pure “sound” theory, or at least part of it, in a direction that Geoffrey Russom has always advocated in his “word foot” theory.¹⁶ In any event, I have no answer at present to the question of why a trisyllabic word should contrast with three monosyllables in their respective mappings onto the metrical template.

7. Compound stress, and later and earlier traditions

Word shapes bring us back to compounds. In §3 above, reference was made to the desirability of finding a general phonetic explanation for greater force at the beginning of each half-line in Old English verse – and at the beginning of the line as a whole. Whether or not articulatory principles can be found is uncertain. It may be that apparent affinities with “downstep” are accidental local effects. It may be that something as straightforward as compound stress sets the metrical mode of Old English verse, just as alternating non-ictus and ictus (typically alternating stress) sets the metrical mode of the iambic pentameter since Chaucer – and of much lyric poetry before Chaucer.

If this is so, what might be called the “downward torque” of the half-line and of the whole line may be a simulacrum of compound stress. Known as “kennings,” the old poetic compounds are among the most salient features of Old English poetic style, perhaps even more so than the superficial feature of alliteration.

It is possible to spend a scholarly life in poetics worrying about how syllables bump against other syllables. The Manchester conference of 1991 brought together a high concentration of people who have thought seriously about matters such as compounds and phrasal stress.¹⁷ It still seems plausible to say that the overall feel of Old English verse is “falling,” certainly in contrast with the Middle and Modern English iambic pentameter. Three of the metrical types (A, C, and most of type D), and a majority of the verses in *Beowulf*, end on an unstressed syllable. Two of the types that end on a stressed syllable, E and the subtype of D known as D4, can be said to “fall” through the first three positions: / \ x /. All of this fits well with “compound

¹⁶ Russom 1987 argues that foot patterns correspond to Old English word patterns. The foot patterns most easily perceived are those that correspond to the most common word patterns. The verse consists of two feet.

¹⁷ For fourteen papers that covered the field at the time, see McCully and Anderson 1996. My own contribution is “Clashing Stress in the Metres of Old, Middle, and Renaissance English.” For a more nuanced analysis of falling patterns in *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, and *Judith*, informed by recent scholarship, see Hartman 2014.

stress." It may be the case, as the present author has argued, that the pattern of verses with the shapes of compounds, such as *mid sciphære* 'with ship-army' (243a), is also the pattern of verses with the shapes of phrases, such as *geond sæl swingeð* 'through hall swings' (2264a).

However, it is almost certainly not the case that these falling contours are the meter itself. They are the *result* of separate forces in the meter. Nothing like a musical setting, as proposed in my own earlier studies, is needed to give them perceptual salience.

One aspect of tempo is that the normal operations of phrasal stress may introduce a "pause," whereas compound stress in its subordination of a following syllable keeps the movement flowing through the syllables. An old example is the difference between the phrase "a man eating fish" and the compound "a man-eating fish." The difference can be shown by any number of phonological representations from the past forty years. One is with a caret to mark a silent beat in the phrase:¹⁸

a man ^ eating fish

There is no pause in the compound:

a man-eating fish

A solution to many of the puzzles of Old English meter seems tantalizing within reach. There is a contrast with the rhythms of Middle English alliterative meter, where the inserted beat may be common. One way of thinking about it is that Middle English is tangibly phrasal. Old English meter is phrasal too, of course, in its half-lines, but it is also tangibly syllabic, of which compound words form an important component.¹⁹ Old English meter is most simply a count of syllables or syllable equivalents, four to the half-line.

If the rhythmic principle of a stress-timed language works against a syllabic meter, compound stress serves as a kind of counterweight. There is no mistaking a count of four in *fēondgrāpum fæst* 'fiend-grip fast' (636a). It is possible, of course, to give an extra-strong beat to the first and last syllables, in accord with the common idea that Old English meter always has two main stresses to the half-line, four to the line. However, this reading seems almost a dipodic imposition. The four syllables of *fēondgrāpum fæst* click into place and re-establish the count that the preceding verse, *opðe on wæl crunge* 'or else in slaughter fall,' may seem to have disrupted. Actually, little disruption occurs, once it

¹⁸ From Catford 1966: 608–9; cited also in Selkirk 1984: 324–5 for Silent Demibeat Addition.

¹⁹ The present author (Cable 1996: 17, and elsewhere) has proposed that in certain limited contexts a silent beat may be part of Old English meter, but the idea has gained no currency.

is clear that the stress-timing element is always allowed scope in one of the first two positions of the verse, to be followed by stability at the end of the verse. In this instance, there is a return to the unmistakable count of four in the next verse.

Meanwhile, Fulk's observations make clear the philological stakes: "The role of stress then looks severely diminished, because although it is required to form a lift, it does not define ictus at every level, while length does, being required at the primary level to form a lift, at the secondary level to determine resolvability, and at the tertiary level as a prerequisite to ictus. Accordingly, Old English prosody looks closer to classical and Indo-European models than was formerly suspected" (1992: 233–4).

It would be a great irony if the features of Old English meter, and Germanic meter generally, are not the strange, *sui generis* mode they may seem, but a natural development from a common Indo-European tradition, just as the meters of other languages – Sanskrit, Greek, Slavic, Celtic, and Italic – each took their own course of development from an unrecorded syllabic meter that is often reconstructed as eight syllables to the line.

Gasparov (1996: 7) summarizes the progress that has been made since Antoine Meillet's pioneering work of 1923, *Les Origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs*, which compared Greek and Sanskrit meters:

In 1952, [Roman] Jakobson placed a third support under Meillet's hypothesis when he reconstructed Common Slavonic verse and showed the way in which it could have developed from Common Indo-European; in 1963, [Calvert] Watkins set down a fourth when he showed how Celtic versification could have developed from Common Indo-European; and in 1969 [Thomas] Cole put a fifth support in place when he extrapolated Old Italic saturnian verse from Common Indo-European. The most stubborn resistance was put up by students of German verse; we cannot yet say in what way it developed from Common Indo-European. Therefore, it is not yet possible to consider that the problem of the genesis of Indo-European verse has been solved.

R.D. Fulk's labors on the most technical aspects of Old English meter have provided insights into the rhythms of individual lines and have established classes of rhythm. Sometimes it is easy for a reader of his scholarship to lose sight of the larger pictures that are implied. On the matter of Indo-European origins, Fulk has been too modest to make claims beyond a sentence or two in passing; however, there is good reason to think that because of his scholarship, and the scholarship that has followed his lead, the intractable problem named by Gasparov is closer than ever to being solved.

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Metrical Criteria for the Emendation of Old English Poetic Texts

Leonard Neidorf

Old English metrics is a field that has attracted many brilliant minds over the past two centuries, yet in each century, there has been one preeminent scholar whose prolific contributions redefined the field. Eduard Sievers (1885, 1893) provided the foundation for modern metrical studies by explaining the apparently random fluctuation of syllables between lines of Old English poetry. He figured out that standard verses consist of precisely four metrical positions, with each position corresponding to a long stressed syllable, a resolved sequence of a short syllable and its successor, or a variable sequence of unstressed syllables.¹ The discovery of the four-position principle opened the door for metrical investigation into the chronology of Old English poetry, since certain verses could now be seen to require the substitution of archaic forms in order to possess four positions: e.g., the verse transmitted as *on flett gæð* (*Beo* 2034b) must have contained the pre-contracted form **gæ-ið* when it was composed. Metrists contemporary with Sievers perceived the possibility of deriving a relative chronology from the distribution of verses requiring archaic phonology for scansion, yet it was not until the appearance of R.D. Fulk's *A History of Old English Meter* (1992) that a comprehensive analysis of the data, informed by advances in Indo-European linguistics, became available. Fulk demonstrated that although the four-position principle obtained throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, language change altered the ability of poets to fill metrical positions with linguistic material. His magnum opus is the definitive exploration of the chronological insights afforded by Sieversian metrics.

Sievers' discoveries also revolutionized the textual criticism of Old English poetry. The application of his metrical system revealed that a small percentage of transmitted verses failed to possess four metrical positions, while also failing to take the form of licensed exceptions (e.g., A3 and D* verses) to this rule. Textual critics have consequently sought to emend the relevant passages, proceeding under the

¹ For insightful expositions of the four-position principle, see Cable 1974: 84–93; Pope-Fulk 2001: 148–50; Terasawa 2011: 49–56; and Pascual 2014: 9–13.

assumption that unmetrical verses do not reflect the compositional tendencies of poets, but are instead the products of scribal corruption. Conservative editors, however, generally refrain from emending *metri causa*, and scholars opposed to emendation frequently contend that meter provides no reliable insights into a work's textual history.² Suspicion of meter pervades the scholarly literature on editing Old English poetry, yet Fulk has critiqued this trend, suggesting that such suspicion is based more in faith than in reason.³ In his theoretical writings, Fulk identified various probabilistic considerations in support of the conclusion that unmetricality is a sign of scribal error: for example, he observed that the regular co-occurrence of metrical defects with independent problems of grammar, syntax, and alliteration corroborates the reliability of meter as a tool for detecting corruption (1996a: 5–6; 1997: 42–6). In practice as well, Fulk has repeatedly demonstrated the relevance of meter to the establishment of a plausible text, in work ranging from his editions of Old English poetry to his numerous articles on the textual criticism of *Beowulf*.⁴

It is difficult, however, for one scholar to cleanse the field of deep-seated suspicions. The present essay therefore aims to advance Fulk's efforts by refuting the principal objection to the use of meter in textual criticism, namely, the belief that some Old English poets might have deliberately composed unmetrical verses. Quite a few scholars have leveled this objection by asserting that since modern poets violate formal norms for special effects, ancient and medieval poets must have done the same thing. Kiernan, for example, rejected the emendation of unmetrical verses because this practice "tends to be normative, while great poetry, even interesting poetry, seldom is" (1981: 185–6). Niles likewise defended the authenticity of unmetrical verses by regarding deviation from metrical norms as an essential feature of human poetry:

² Distrust of meter as a tool for textual criticism is expressed in Busse 1981; Kiernan 1981; Taylor and Davis 1982; Stanley 1984; and Niles 1994. To be sure, suspicion of meter is not a recent phenomenon; see Hoops 1932: 9.

³ Fulk has written several illuminating essays on the principles of textual criticism, which contend that probabilistic reasoning requires informed observers to credit judgments grounded in metrical considerations; see the entries for 1996a, 1997, and 2007b. Representative of Fulk's defense of metrics is the following passage: "Because the study of meter requires more specialized knowledge than other sorts of textual evidence, and so is less generally understood, meter is also the criterion least trusted by editors, and most widely rejected out of hand by textual conservatives. Yet in some ways, meter is actually the most reliable means of presenting a convincing case for textual corruption, since it is the area in which probabilities are most readily quantifiable" (1996a: 5; cf. 1997: 40 and 2007b: 144).

⁴ Pertinent Old English editorial work includes Pope-Fulk 2001; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008; and Fulk 2014. The relevance of meter to textual history is not always indicated in the text through emendation, but it is always made admirably clear in the commentary. For a representative selection from his voluminous work on *Beowulf* textual criticism, see Fulk 2007a.

“Emendations that are made *metri causa* eliminate poetic license by fiat. They can take no account of departures from the norm for special reasons or effect” (1994: 452). Many similar arguments have been made (e.g., in the works cited in n. 2), and these arguments appear to be credited whenever an unmetrical verse is printed in a critical edition without comment. Contemporary scholars with literary tastes that are informed by postmodern aesthetics readily assume that “poets are notorious rule breakers” (Bredehoft 2005: 31) and always have been, but what compelling evidence is there to support the belief that Anglo-Saxon poets would deliberately compose verses that failed to comply with the four-position principle?

Arguments for the authenticity of unmetrical verses have hitherto been directed only at suspected corruptions in the transmitted text of poems preserved in a single manuscript copy, typically *Beowulf*. In the absence of a second manuscript copy, the authentic character of these unmetrical verses cannot be confirmed and must usually be taken on faith, since reasoned consideration of the text’s internal consistency suggests that such verses are corrupt and that Old English poets took considerable pains to impose strict metrical regularities upon their compositions. There is, however, a substantial corpus of poetic texts preserved in two or more manuscript copies, including *Soul and Body*, *Solomon and Saturn*, the *Chronicle* poems, and the shared passages in *Daniel* and *Azarias*.⁵ The present essay scrutinizes this collection of materials in order to determine whether unmetrical verses transmitted in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts reflect a genuine feature of poetic artistry or an illusory consequence of scribal error. With poems preserved in two or more copies, the authenticity of unmetrical verses can be determined with reasonable certainty, since consultation of a second manuscript will usually indicate if such verses represent accidental distortions of metrical originals. If two or more manuscripts preserve the same unmetrical verse, a strong case for its authenticity could be made. On the other hand, if manuscript collation consistently reveals that unmetrical verses are scribal corruptions, then it is probable that the entire phenomenon is spurious, and that Anglo-Saxon poets never deliberately composed verses that violated the rules of metrical composition.

⁵ This corpus of texts is comprehensively described and analyzed in O’Donnell 1996. Less comprehensive, but richer in insight, is the study of textual variants in Orton 2000. Both works are indispensable, and they proved invaluable to me when I compiled the tables of evidence presented below. Citations of Old English poems refer to the editions of Krapp and Dobbie (1931–53), retaining their lineation, though often restoring the manuscript reading. When reference to a particular manuscript of a work is necessary, conventional abbreviations following the use of Orton (2000: xv–xvii) appear beside the poem’s short title. Citations of *Soul and Body* refer to the edition of Moffat 1990; and citations of *Beowulf* refer to Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008. Macrons have been silently inserted over long vowels throughout.

Three-position verses

The four codices containing the majority of the extant corpus of Old English poetry transmit unmetrical verses in a variety of unpredictable forms. Some of these verses are too light, possessing fewer than four metrical positions, while others are too heavy, possessing more than four positions. This state of affairs is to be expected, since the poetic manuscripts were produced by fallible manual laborers, who might accidentally alter the precise number or arrangement of syllables in the texts they copied. Since the unconscious omission of words or letters was a particularly common form of scribal error, it is not surprising that unmetrical verses frequently contain three or fewer positions. Three-position verses are found sporadically in each of the poetic codices, and at least fourteen such verses were transmitted in the manuscripts of poems preserved in two or more copies. These unmetrical verses are listed in the left column of the table printed below, while the right column lists the metrical equivalent attested in one or more parallel text of the poem:

Table 3.1: Three-position (or fewer) verses

<i>līc ond sāwl</i> (SBII 5a)	<i>līc and sāwle</i> (SBI 5a)
<i>þæs þe þearf wæs</i> (DEw C 34a)	<i>þæs þe þearfe wæs</i> (DEdW D 34a)
<i>ceald brymmas</i> (DEw C 12b)	<i>cealda brymmas</i> (DEw D 12b)
<i>þeah hē lang ær</i> (DEw C 16a)	<i>þeah hē langa ær</i> (DEw D 16a)
<i>wilddēora</i> (SBI 81b)	<i>wildra dēora</i> (SBII 81b)
<i>heofonrīces</i> (SnS B 52a)	<i>heofona rīces</i> (SnS A 52a)
<i>þonne biþ þæt werge</i> (SBII 122b)	<i>þonne þæt werie</i> (SBI 122b)
<i>secgas hwate</i> (Brun A 13a)	<i>secga swāte</i> (Brun B/C/D 13a)
<i>dēora by</i> (CFB A 8a)	<i>ond dēora by</i> (CFB B/C/D 8a)
<i>eorlscipes</i> (SnS B 11b)	<i>oððe eorlscipes</i> (SnS A 11b)
<i>dæda georn</i> (Dan 281a)	<i>dræg dædum georn</i> (Aza 3a)
<i>on eorþan</i> (SBI 125a)	<i>æt on eorþan</i> (SBII 125a)
<i>hige heortan</i> (SnS B 62a)	<i>hige heortan nēah</i> (SnS A 62a)
<i>ond þurh help</i> (Dan 292a)	<i>ond þurh hylðo help</i> (Aza 13a)

Comparison of the parallel texts is instructive, since it indicates that all fourteen three-position verses are spurious, and it reveals how these verses managed to be transmitted. In each case, a fairly minor scribal change to the text, probably accidental, reduced the number of metrical positions in the verse and generated a sequence that cannot be accommodated to the dictates of Sieversian metrics. The first four verses listed above became unmetrical through the mere omission of a single

letter, the inflectional ending *-e* (or *-a*), which provides a necessary drop in their authentic forms. The following two verses became unmetrical through a minor morphological change, as two separate words (e.g., *wildra dēora*) were collapsed into a compound (*wilddēora*) containing one less syllable. In the next two verses, the scribal trivialization of an authentic word into a word of similar appearance reduced the number of metrical positions: *secga swāte* is viable because the long root vowel of *swāte*, ‘blood,’ forbids resolution, whereas *secgas hwate* fails to be metrical because the short root vowel of *hwate*, ‘bold,’ requires the sequence to be resolved. The final six verses became unmetrical through the omission of a single word. In two cases, the omitted word is a proclitic (*ond*, *oððe*), in another two it is a particle (*drēag*, *æt*), and in the last two it is a stress-word (*nēah*, *hyldo*). In each case, the loss of a word results in the loss of at least one metrical position.

The ease with which scribal errors generated verses containing three or fewer metrical positions is worth bearing in mind when confronting such verses in the transmitted text of a poem preserved in a single manuscript. To turn to the paradigmatic case, the manuscript of *Beowulf* sporadically transmits verses with insufficient linguistic material to fill four metrical positions. Ten representative verses of this sort are presented in the table printed below, with the manuscript reading in the left column and the emended reading in the right column:

Table 3.2: Three-position (or fewer) verses in *Beowulf*

MS Reading	<i>Beowulf</i> (ed. Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008)
<i>forðām wearð</i>	<i>Forðām [gesýne] wearð</i> (149b)
<i>grētte þā</i>	<i>[Ge]grētte þā</i> (652a)
<i>ærgōd</i>	<i>[æpelīng] ærgōd</i> (1329a)
<i>gegnum fōr</i>	<i>[þær] gegnum fōr</i> (1404b)
<i>brād brūnecg</i>	<i>brād [ond] brūnecg</i> (1546a)
<i>in ðām sele</i>	<i>in ðām [gūð]sele</i> (2139a)
<i>hrēas blāc</i>	<i>hrēas [hilde]blāc</i> (2488a)
<i>ac unc sceal</i>	<i>ac unc [feohte] sceal</i> (2525b)
<i>tō gamene</i>	<i>[fuglum] tō gamene</i> (2941a)
<i>hilderinc</i>	<i>hilderinc[a]</i> (3124a)

The editorial conviction that these manuscript readings are corruptions requiring emendation should be strengthened in the light of the material adduced in Table 3.1. In the *Beowulf* manuscript, similar scribal errors appear to be responsible for the transmission of verses with three or fewer metrical positions. In each case, the accidental omission

of a word, a prefix, or an inflectional ending rendered the verse metrically defective. Some scholars (e.g., Keyser 1969, Niles 1994) have regarded one or more of the examples cited above as genuine verses, but an array of probabilistic considerations, presented at length by Russom (1987: 116–32) and Pascual (2013–14), demands the conclusion that these verses are inauthentic. In the present context, it must be observed that belief in the authenticity of three-position verses requires belief in an improbable degree of scribal accuracy in the transmission of *Beowulf*. Many independent scribes can be seen in the table above to have generated three-position verses through the accidental omission of text. It would be unreasonable to expect scribes to transmit a poem as long as *Beowulf* without occasionally committing comparable errors.

Five-position verses

Comparison of the texts of poems preserved in more than one copy also furnishes compelling evidence for the inauthenticity of verses containing more than four metrical positions. No fewer than seven verses with five positions that are transmitted in one of the relevant manuscripts are revealed to be corruptions through collation of the parallel texts. These seven verses are printed in the table below, with the unmetrical verse in the left column and the authentic rendering in the right column:

Table 3.3: Five-position verses

<i>forþæm hī his sume beþorftan</i> (PCP T 15b)	<i>forðæm hī his sume þorftan</i> (PCP H 15b)
<i>gif ðū him ærest on ufan</i> (SnS A 88a)	<i>gyf þū him ærest ufan</i> (SnS B 88a)
<i>Nū wē sceolon herian herian</i> (Caed Ld 1a)	<i>Nū sculon herian</i> (Caed 1a)
<i>sceal āmas cnyssan</i> (Rid35 8b)	<i>āam sceal cnyssa</i> (LeidR 8b)
<i>ond þane hasewan pādan</i> (Brun A 62b)	<i>ond þone hasupādan</i> (Brun B/C 62b)
<i>þær þū wurde æt frumsceafte fugel</i> (SBII 78a)	<i>þær ðū wurde æt frymðe fugel</i> (SBI 78a)
<i>āsceāden of scyldigum</i> (SnS A 56a)	<i>āsceāden of scyldum</i> (SnS B 56a)
<i>wīse sōðboran</i> (DEdg A 33a)	<i>wīse wōðboran</i> (DEdg B/C 33a)

While omission is the standard cause for three-position verses, the scribal alterations responsible for five-position verses are more diverse in nature. The first two verses became unmetrical through the interpolation of a prefix (*be-*) and a preposition (*on*) respectively. It is well known that scribes took liberties with proclitics in the texts they copied, usually to no detriment of the meter, but in these cases

their interpolations result in the creation of one additional metrical position.⁶ The third verse, on the other hand, is transparently corrupt and unmetrical because of dittography. Morphological alterations, meanwhile, account for the presence of the fourth and fifth verses: the scribal alteration of singular *ām* to plural *āmas* creates syntactical difficulties as well as implausible meter; and the superfluous conversion of an uninflected compound element (*hasu-*) into an inflected weak adjective (*hasuwan*) resulted in another five-position verse.

Lexical substitutions generated metrical defects in the final three verses in the table. A scribe's decision to replace *frymðe* with the synonymous *frumsceaft* turned a standard type B verse into a type E with four anacrustic syllables (xxxxSsxS) – an unparalleled and obviously defective arrangement. The probably unconscious alteration of *scyldum* into *scyldigum* resulted in another metrical monstrosity that resembles no acceptable verse contour. The trivialization of the poetic *wōð* into the commonplace *sōð* created a verse that resembles an expanded D* (*wīse sōðboran*), but fails to exhibit the requisite double alliteration that signals a poet's use of this metrical license (Sievers 1893: §84.7; Bliss 1967: §§64–5). The fact that *wīse sōðboran* is a demonstrably inauthentic distortion of a verse that originally possessed double alliteration should strengthen conviction in the conclusion that Old English poets maintained strict adherence to the rules governing the composition of D* verses. When a transmitted verse appears to require D* scansion, but lacks double alliterations, editors are justified in suspecting corruption. The editors of *Klaeber IV* are among the first in the poem's history to emend the manuscript's *Bēowulf Scyldinga* to *Bēow Scyldinga* (53b), but they are certainly justified in doing so, since it is improbable that the poet would have composed the transmitted reading. Genuine manifestations of the D* verse routinely exhibit double alliteration; apparent exceptions to this rule in *Beowulf* tend to be accompanied by signs that corroborate the metrist's suspicion of corruption (see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: App. C., §30–1).

Alliteration and the rule of precedence

Sievers' discovery of the four-position principle permitted the detection of a number of other compositional regularities, such as those pertaining to D* verses, that were observed by Old English poets and have proven valuable to textual critics. Several rules concerning the placement of alliteration were shown to have existed in order to

⁶ On the metrical insignificance of much of the tampering evident in the parallel texts, see Fulk 2003: 18–25; for further illustration of scribal alteration of proclitics, see Amos 1980: 171–96.

preserve the integrity of the four-position principle, the most notable of which is the rule of precedence, anticipated beforehand in the observations of Max Rieger (1876: 18–34). The rule of precedence holds that the first lift of the line must participate in its alliterative scheme, and that the word occupying this lift must belong to a lexical category that receives prosodic stress greater than or equal to that of the category to which the word occupying the second lift belongs (Pope-Fulk 2001: 134; Terasawa 2011: 21–4). Thus, a preposition (a proclitic) or a finite verb (a particle) cannot take precedence over a noun or an adjective (a stress-word); and when a verse contains two words that receive equivalent degrees of prosodic stress, the first of these two words must alliterate. Transmitted verses that violate the rule of precedence or exhibit defective alliteration broadly construed have long been regarded as products of scribal error. The poems preserved in two or more copies confirm that this conclusion is sound. Six verses with alliterative defects that are recorded in one manuscript can be shown to be corruptions of verses that originally adhered to the rules governing alliteration:

Table 3.4: Verses with alliterative defects

<i>gode lifgendum</i> (SBII 68a)	<i>lifiendum gode</i> (SBI 68a)
<i>ūser ylðran</i> (Dan 297a)	<i>ylðran ūsse</i> (Aza 18a)
<i>swā waroþa sond</i> (Aza 39a)	<i>sæfaroða sand</i> (Dan 322a)
<i>se ācenneda</i> (SBI 51a)	<i>se āncenda</i> (SBII 51a)
<i>dæg gled on gārūm</i> (Brun D 53b)	<i>nægledcnearum</i> (Brun A/B/C 53b)
<i>þe þū mē ær scrife</i> (SBII 69b)	<i>þe ðū mē hēr scrife</i> (SBI 69b)

Transposition and trivialization are the most common sources of the alliterative defects. In the first two examples, it is clear that a scribe has reversed the original order of the words found in his exemplar. Because the off-verse of line 68 in *Soul and Body* requires the on-verse to alliterate on *l*, *lifiendum gode* follows the rule of precedence, whereas *gode lifgendum* fails to do so, since its first lift cannot participate in the line's alliterative scheme. In *Azarias*, *ylðran ūsse* adheres to the rule of precedence because the first of these two alliterating words is a stress-word, while the second is a particle. In *Daniel*, the corresponding verse, *ūser ylðran*, has inverted word order and is consequently defective, since the possessive pronoun here occupies the line's most prominent lift. Elsewhere, *Daniel* preserves the authentic verse *sæfaroða sand*, which was corrupted into *swā waroþa sond* in *Azarias*. Since the alliteration of the line is on *s*, the trivialization of the compound results in a verse that violates the rule of precedence, in which the second of two nouns (*sond*) is the first to occupy an alliterating lift.

Defects of sense and alliteration result from the trivialization of *se āncenda*, ‘the only-begotten,’ into *se ācenneda*, ‘the begotten.’⁷ The line requires the on-verse to exhibit vocalic alliteration, which can be supplied by the compound element *ān-*, but not by the unstressed prefix *ā-*, which never occupies an alliterating lift. Because *se ācenneda* can alliterate only on *c*, this verse fails to alliterate. Similar problems attend the extraordinary trivialization of *nægledcnearum*, ‘with nailed ships,’ into the nonsensical sequence *dæg gled on gārūm*. Since the on-verse requires the off-verse to alliterate on *n*, this corruption both fails to alliterate and is too heavy, on account of its five metrical positions. In the final case, the corruption of *hēr* into *ær* converted *þe ðū mē hēr scrife*, a type C with *h* alliteration, into a three-position off-verse that fails to alliterate with its on-verse. As these examples make plain, alliterative defects are reliable indicators of textual corruption. The scribal propensity for trivialization generated more than a few verses with comparable alliterative defects in the *Beowulf* manuscript. The editors of *Klaeber IV* justly emend, for example, the manuscript’s *hroden* out of the verse *Ðā wæs heal roden* (1151b), since trivialization of the participle forced the final lift of the line to participate in its alliterative scheme – a circumstance ubiquitously prohibited in classical Old English poetry. Equally well founded is the decision to emend *syn-* to *scyn-* in the verse *se scynscaþa* (707a): because the line alliterates on the *sc* cluster, the manuscript reading violates both Krackow’s law and the rule of precedence, thereby providing two unmistakable signs of corruption.⁸

Anacrusis and Kuhn’s Law of Sentence Particles

Recognition of the four-position structure of the standard Old English verse enabled scholars to discern several regularities concerning the variable metrical behavior of proclitics and particles. Sievers observed that on relatively infrequent occasions, an extrametrical syllable or two – usually taking the form of a prefix, preposition, or conjunction – preceded the first lift of some verses of types A and D (1893: §83). This phenomenon, known as anacrusis, was a salient metrical license permitted only under a set of severely restricted conditions, which subsequent metrists have elaborated (e.g., Cable 1974: 32–44).

⁷ This particular example has been analyzed by Fulk, who adduced it to illustrate the reliability of meter in textual criticism and perceptively remarked: “Since the loss of *n* has a straightforward scribal explanation in the form of a missing mark of abbreviation, doubtless Krapp would have emended *acenneda* even without the witness of the Exeter Book” (1996a: 9).

⁸ Krackow observed that the first of the two elements in authentic compounds always participates in the alliterative scheme of the line (1903: 43–4).

When anacrusis appears in verses that fail to meet these conditions, corruption of some sort is generally suspected. The poems preserved in multiple copies furnish two verses where faulty anacrusis can be seen to be the consequence of scribal interpolation:

Table 3.5: Verses with defective anacrusis

<i>mid irenum æpplum</i> (SnS A 28a)	<i>irenum aplum</i> (SnS B 28a)
<i>on wēstenne weard</i> (SnS A 82a)	<i>wēstenes weard</i> (SnS B 83a)

In the first of the two verses, the inauthenticity of *mid* is made apparent by a constraint on anacrusis that Bliss observed: this license is not permitted in Type A verses consisting of two words that receive stress on their initial syllables (1967: §46–7). Accordingly, anacrusis can appear in verses such as *gesigan æt sæcce* (Beo 2659a), but it would not be permitted before a verse like *gomban gyldan* (Beo 11a). In the second of the table’s two verses, the interpolated status of *on* is indicated by the stricture against the presence of anacrusis in type E verses (Bliss 1967: §50). In both cases, it is clear that the poet of *Solomon and Saturn* adhered to the rules governing the deployment of anacrusis. What produced the exceptional anacrusis in one manuscript of this poem was one scribe’s decision to trivialize the syntax of the text through the interpolation of proclitics.

Hans Kuhn’s *Satzpartikelgesetz* (law of sentence particles) identified the conditions under which particles – i.e., words of variable stress, such as pronouns and finite verbs – can be made to occupy ictic positions (1933: 8). In essence, it holds that metrical stress is assigned to particles whenever they are displaced from the first drop of the verse clause. Some exceptions to the rule exist, but classical poets maintained adherence to the *Satzpartikelgesetz* with a remarkable degree of regularity (Donoghue 1997; Orton 1999). It is therefore not improbable that scribal error played a role in the generation of some verses rendered unmetrical through the assignment of stress to displaced particles. The manuscripts of poems preserved in multiple copies contain two such verses, in which violations of Kuhn’s law of sentence particles can be seen to result from scribal interpolations:

Table 3.6: Violations of Kuhn’s Law of Sentence Particles

<i>ond on þone seofodan þū gerestest</i> (Gll J 23b)	<i>seofodan þū gerestest</i> (Gll C 23b)
<i>tōswēop hine ond tōswende</i> (Dan 341a)	<i>tōswēop ond tōswengde</i> (Aza 59a)

In the verse from *The Gloria I*, the scribal origins of *ond on þone* are revealed by the effect that the presence of these words has on *þū*: if *ond on þone* forms the first drop of the verse clause, *þū* becomes a displaced particle that must receive metrical stress, producing a verse with five

positions (preceded by an improbable string of anacrustic syllables). In *Daniel*, the inauthenticity of *hine* is apparent for similar reasons: since the prefix *to-* formed the first drop of the verse clause, *hine* would be a displaced particle that needs to be stressed, resulting in a verse that contains five metrical positions in addition to anacrusis. In these cases, comparison of the parallel texts indicates that violations of Kuhn's law of sentence particles can serve as reliable indicators of textual corruption.

Genuine unmetrical verses?

At the outset of this study, it was noted that a strong case for the authenticity of unmetrical verses could be made if many such verses could be shown to be common to all of the manuscripts of a poem preserved in two or more copies. Under those circumstances, it would be difficult to regard unmetrical verses as the consequences of scribal corruption rather than authorial deliberation. My examination of the parallel texts, however, has turned up vanishingly few unambiguous instances of unmetrical verses that are common to a poem's textual witnesses. Closer scrutiny of these few instances reveals, moreover, that they provide weak evidence for the view that Old English poets deliberately composed unmetrical verses. Outside of the *Chronicle* poems, there appear to be only two relevant verses. In the first case, *nīðas tō nergenne*, a verse common to *Daniel* (284a) and *Azarias* (6a), the scribal origins of corruption are obvious. The verse is one of many where the scribal decision to inflect an uninflected infinitive leads to a violation of the stricture against the protraction of the verse-final drop.⁹ Less obvious is the source of corruption for *þæt þū wære þurh flāsc*, an aberrant verse common to both versions of *Soul and Body* (44a). Two plausible solutions have been proposed: Holthausen observed that if *wære* were placed after *flāsc*, a standard type C verse would result (1907: 198), while Moffat noted that emendation to dative *flāsce* produces a normal A3 verse (1990: 72). The ease with which metricality could be restored to this verse renders its authorial status insecure. The fact that some metrists would regard the pattern exhibited in this verse as an acceptable contour also diminishes its value for those who would adduce it as evidence for intentional unmetrical composition (see Pope 1966: xxx; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: App. C., §28).

⁹ Scholars have long observed that there is a correlation between metrical defects and verses containing inflected infinitives. Since it cannot be a coincidence that defects so consistently accompany inflected infinitives, it is obvious that many independent scribes have systematically added inflections to infinitives that were originally uninflected. The phenomenon has engendered considerable discussion; see Sievers 1885: 255, 312, 482; Pope 1966: 237; Bliss 1967: §44; Fulk 1992: §3; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: App. C., §21.

The manuscripts of the *Chronicle* poems share two verses that are unmetrical according to the standards of classical Old English poetry: *grædigne gūðhafoc* (Brun 64a) and *sōðfæste sǣwle* (DEw 28a), both of which appear to possess five metrical positions. These examples, however, cannot be regarded as evidence for the view that poets deliberately intended to compose verses that fail to comply with the four-position principle. Rather, they represent the efforts of late Old English poets to compose metrically acceptable verses after the degeneration of tertiary ictus.¹⁰ Poems from the tenth and eleventh century commonly contain verses wherein a syllable that would receive tertiary ictus in classical poetry must instead be treated as a non-ictic syllable – a state of affairs anticipating Early Middle English developments (see Fulk 1992: §§238, 245, 297, 300, 311). This is evident, for example, in verses such as *stiðlice clypode* (Mald 25b), *ēadigne upweg* (Men 193a), and *ænigre wihte* (JDay II 203b). The chronological distribution of these verses indicates that phonological change altered the ability of poets to fill metrical positions with linguistic material. For the *Chronicle* poets, *grædigne gūðhafoc* and *sōðfæste sǣwle* were not unmetrical, but were four-position verses, in which the heavy middle syllable of a trisyllabic word did not occupy a lift, but was instead the first of two unstressed syllables in a protracted drop.¹¹ Such verses constitute evidence for language change, not for the deliberate composition of unmetrical verses.

The preceding analysis of the poems preserved in two or more manuscript copies has demonstrated that there is a strong correlation between metrical defects and scribal error. The vast majority of the unmetrical verses transmitted in one manuscript can be shown by consultation of a second manuscript to be accidental distortions of authentic verses that originally complied with the four-position principle and adhered to the various rules restricting metrical licenses. In view of this demonstration, it does not appear reasonable to regard unmetrical verses in the unique manuscript witness to *Beowulf* or other Old English poems as evidence for a poet's conscious desire to violate metrical norms. If only one manuscript of *Solomon and Saturn* or *Soul and Body* survived, scholars resistant to emendation might well argue that several of the unmetrical verses it transmits are the genuine manifestations of

¹⁰ One of the richest chapters of *A History of Old English Meter* concerns tertiary stress (or, more accurately, ictus at the tertiary level) and explores the variable treatment of this phenomenon during the Anglo-Saxon period (Fulk 1992: Ch. 7). It is in the context of these observations that Fulk's law, or the Rule of the Coda, was propounded (§226).

¹¹ Although language change licensed minor innovations, "the underlying four-position pattern remains unchanged over the history of Old English verse, from *Cædmon's Hymn* to *Durham*. Even poems like *Maldon* that differ widely from the standard of *Beowulf* in numerous details do not violate the four-position pattern" (Fulk 1992: §208).

a poet's compositional decisions. Because parallel texts survive, we are in a position to recognize with certainty that such arguments would be mistaken. Since it is clear that scribal error, not poetic practice, is consistently responsible for the generation of metrical defects, we are also in a position to recognize that editors who regard unmetrical verses as sites of corruption requiring emendation are correct in holding this assumption. If *Daniel* survived without *Azarias*, textual critics who credit metrical scholarship would still suspect corruption in *dæda georn* (*Dan* 281a) and *ond þurh help* (*Dan* 292a). The parallel text in *Azarias* confirms that they would be right to do so. Textual criticism grounded in metrical considerations appears sound.

A profound methodological insight to emerge from the present study is that ethnocentric assumptions about poets and poetry have impeded the advancement of knowledge in Old English scholarship. Resistance to conclusions drawn in metrical studies has been premised upon the belief that poets imposed formal regularities upon their work in order to violate them "for special reasons or effect" (Niles 1994: 452).¹² Verses that violate formal expectations can then be regarded not as textual corruptions, but as marks of literary sophistication, reactions against an inherited tradition, and expressions of a poet's unique subjectivity. These aesthetic assumptions might be appropriate to the literary criticism of Renaissance or Romantic poetry, but they appear to have no applicability to the study of Old English literature. Furthermore, the tendency to assume that the qualities prized in contemporary literary culture were accorded equal value more than a thousand years ago threatens to obscure our apprehension of the aesthetic principles informing the composition of Old English poetry. When these anachronistic assumptions are discarded, and the evidence is confronted on its own terms, it becomes apparent that Anglo-Saxon poets were tradition-bearers who strove to be as metrically conservative as possible. The extant poetic texts offer no compelling reasons for us to believe that Anglo-Saxon poets or audiences regarded defective meter or alliteration as a mark of literary

¹² It remains unclear why a poet should have needed to resort to the composition of unmetrical verses to achieve these unspecified effects. Certainly, there was no need to violate the four-position principle to achieve rhythmic variation, since the Old English metrical system licensed a great deal of variation in its acceptable patterns. The point is well made by Bliss: "We do not find the 'degree of discrepancy, some room for play,' which Lewis sees in all good metre, and it would seem at first glance that its absence means a substantial loss of variety and flexibility; but in fact variety and flexibility are achieved in another way. It is the metrical patterns themselves which are varied and flexible; we have not, as in most metres, a single arbitrary invariable pattern whose repetition in its strict form would be intolerably monotonous, but a constantly variable succession of patterns which have unquestionably much in common, but whose diversity is more conspicuous than their uniformity" (1962: 29). For further observations on forms of licensed variation within the metrical system, see Fulk 1996b: 66–7.

sophistication. On the relatively infrequent occasions when transmitted verses are metrically defective, there tend to be independent signs of scribal corruption, not poetic subtlety.

Finally, it must be noted that the demonstrable inauthenticity of so many verses unable to be accommodated to Sievers' metrical system provides stunning corroboration of that system's descriptive reliability. Sievers must have accurately identified the verse patterns that were permitted and prohibited in Old English poetry, since the consistent correlation between prohibited patterns and textual corruption cannot be regarded as a coincidence. The present essay thus further elevates the credibility of Sievers' findings and lends additional support to the edifice of research erected upon his metrical system. The regularity detected herein joins the ranks of other regularities detected within the framework of Sieversian metrics by scholars such as Kaluza (1896), Krackow (1903), Kuhn (1933), Bliss (1967), Fulk (1992), Terasawa (1994), and Pascual (2015). The fact that Sievers' system facilitated the discovery of so many interdependent regularities is a sure sign that it is correct. The inauthenticity of unmetrical verses also corroborates arguments for the linguistic basis of metrical constraints propounded by Kuryłowicz (1970), Russom (1987), and Fulk (1995). If the conventions of Old English meter were not artificial, but were grounded in subconscious linguistic processes, then it makes sense that poets did not (and perhaps could not) deliberately compose unmetrical verses.¹³ In short, the myth of the verse that is both authentic and unmetrical cannot be reconciled with recent advances in metrical scholarship. It is time for that myth to be discarded, and for the fruits of metrical scholarship to become more widely integrated with the assumptions routinely brought to Anglo-Saxon literary studies.

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¹³ Relevant to this observation are Kendall's remarks: "Parry and Lord, working with illiterate singers of tales in Yugoslavia, discovered that they had no conception of so basic a notion as a line of poetry [Lord 1960: 25]. For this reason, it is unlikely that the typical unlettered scop ever consciously bent the rules of his metre for poetic effect. His poetic utterance was governed by the metrical grammar he had acquired. To speak poetically was to speak metrically, because metre was an integral part of grammar" (1991: 11).

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The Suppression of the Subjunctive in *Beowulf*: A Metrical Explanation

Jun Terasawa

In Old English, concessive clauses introduced by the conjunction *þēah* (*pe*) are almost always associated with the subjunctive mood. According to Burnham (1911: 24), the prose texts provide 693 instances of the *þēah*-clause where only 10 (1.4%) are in indicative mood. In a work intended as a companion volume to Burnham's monograph, Quirk (1954: 31, 33) made a comprehensive study of concessive clauses in Old English verse texts, stating that "the mood of verbs in dependent *þēah*-members is overwhelmingly subjunctive": of 223 finite verbs in the *þēah* (*pe*)-clauses, 127 are clearly subjunctive, 87 are ambiguous, and 9 are indicative, of which Quirk dismisses four problematic cases to reach "five unchallenged instances of indicative, ... that is, 2.2 per cent of the total of the verbs in dependent *þēah*-members."¹ A preponderance of the subjunctive in the *þēah*-clauses can, for instance, be seen in *Beowulf*: there occur 27 instances of the *þēah*-clause, only two of which contain verbs unambiguously in indicative mood (hereafter emphasis in quotations mine):²

Ne nōm hē in þāem wīcum, Weder-Gēata lēod,
mādmæhta mā, þēh hē þær monige geseah (*Beo* 1612–13)

[He, the prince of the Weder-Geats, did not take any more precious objects from that dwelling, although he saw many there]

nō ðȳ ær hē þone heaðorinc hatian ne meahte
lāðum dædum, þēah him lēof ne wæs. (*Beo* 2466–7)

[yet he (=Hrethel) could not persecute the battle-warrior (=Hæthcyn) with hateful deeds, although (Hæthcyn) was not dear to him (=Hrethel)]

¹ Mitchell's figures differ slightly from Quirk's: "I find that of 210 simple concessive clauses introduced by *þēah* (*pe*), 118 have the subjunctive, 85 an ambiguous form, and 7 the indicative" (OES: §3426).

² The *Beowulf* text is taken from Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008. In the epic, although some cases are morphologically ambiguous between indicative and subjunctive, the following instances of the conjunction *þēah* (*pe*) are generally regarded as taking the subjunctive: 203, 526, 587, 589, 680, 682, 1102, 1130, 1167, 1368, 1660, 1716, 1831, 1927, 1941, 2031, 2161, 2218, 2344, 2481, 2619, 2642, 2838, 2855, 2976.

In both of the instances, the *þeah*-clause describes a fact. But, as Campbell (1956: 65) states, “[*þ*]*eah* takes the subjunctive in subordinate clauses by rule, and quite independently of the reality of the concession.” In the verse below, which looks very much similar to verse 2467b in wording as well as in meaning, the poet used the subjunctive *wære* in the *þeah*-clause with reference to a fact:

þeah hē him lēof *wære* (*Beo* 203b)
[though he (=Beowulf) was dear to them]

Meter affords the key to the use of the indicative in verses 1613b and 2467b. First to be noticed is that both verses containing the *þeah*-clauses are of Type B with the verse final lift on the indicative verbs:

$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & x & \text{---} & x & x & / \\ \text{þēh} & \text{hē} & \text{þær} & \text{monige} & \text{geseah} & & \end{array}$ (1613b)
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & / & x & / & & \\ \text{þeah} & \text{him} & \text{lēof} & \text{ne} & \text{wæs} & & \end{array}$ (2467b)

If the verbs were in subjunctive mood as normally expected, both verses would be of Type A with the verbal endings of the subjunctive *gesāwe* and *wære* forming the verse final dip:

$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & x & \text{---} & x & x & / \ x \\ \text{þēh} & \text{hē} & \text{þær} & \text{monige} & \text{gesāwe} & & \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & / & x & / \ x & & \\ \text{þeah} & \text{him} & \text{lēof} & \text{ne} & \text{wære} & & \end{array}$

Each of the hypothetical Type A verses above is preceded by a series of unstressed syllables. It is important to note that the *Beowulf* poet tends to avoid anacrusis in the off-verses, the epic yielding not a single instance of off-verses with disyllabic anacrusis or more except for hypermetric verses (Bliss 1967: 127, table III).³ It is interesting here to compare verse 2467b with 203b again. Since no element like the negative *ne* intervenes between *lēof* and the *be*-verb, verse 203b perfectly fits Type C where *wære* consists of the second lift and dip.

$\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & x & / & / & x & \\ \text{þeah} & \text{hē} & \text{him} & \text{lēof} & \text{wære} & & \end{array}$

³ In *Beowulf*, there occur eight instances of Type A off-verses with monosyllabic anacrusis (93b, 666b, 1223b, 1504b, 1773b, 1877b, 2247b, 2592b). (Donoghue [1987] regards them as a subtype of Type C.) Although Sievers (1885: 234) lists three instances of Type A off-verses with disyllabic anacrusis (665b, 1766b, 2428b), they should be analyzed otherwise:
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & \text{---} & x & x & x & / \ x \\ \text{Hæfde} & \text{kyningwuldor} & & \text{oððe} & \text{eagena} & \text{bearhtm} & \end{array}$ (665b, Type C), $\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & \text{---} & x & x & x & / \ x \\ \text{þa} & \text{mec} & \text{sinca} & & & & \end{array}$
 $\begin{array}{ccccccc} x & x & \text{---} & x & x & x & / \ x \\ \text{baldor} & & & & & & \end{array}$ (2428b, Type B with an epenthetic vowel ignored in *baldor*).

The Suppression of the Subjunctive in Beowulf

These considerations lead us strongly to suggest that the *Beowulf* poet would suppress the use of the subjunctive in the *þeah*-clauses in 1613b and 2467b primarily for the sake of meter.

Along with concessive clauses, temporal clauses introduced by the conjunction *ær* (*þon*) often take the subjunctive. In *Beowulf*, the subjunctive form of the verb is always used in the *ær* (*þon*)-clauses with the sole exception of verse 2019b that contains an unambiguously indicative form, i.e. *gēong*:⁴

oft hīo bēahwriðan
secge sealde ær hīe tō setle gēong (*Beo* 2018b–19)

[often she (Wealhtheow) gave a ring-band to a man before she went to her seat]

Interestingly, the syntactic and metrical structure of verse 2019b looks quite like that of verses 1613b and 2467b already discussed: verse 2019b begins with a conjunction followed by one or more unstressed syllables and ends with an indicative verb, the metrical type being of Type B:

x x x / x /
ær hīe tō setle gēong

With the subjunctive form *gēonge*, verse 2019b would belong to Type A preceded by trisyllabic anacrusis, a metrical subtype that the *Beowulf* poet strictly avoids:

x x x / x / x
ær hīe tō setle gēonge

Clauses governed by conjunctions with the meaning ‘unless’ are normally associated with the subjunctive. Consider the following *Beowulf* passage where the subjunctive forms of the verbs (i.e. *swice*, *scolde*) are used in the *būtan*-clause and the main clause, both referring to the rejected condition and conclusion:⁵

Ic hine hrædlīce heardan clammum
on wælbēdde wriþan þōhte,
þæt hē for mundgripe mīnum scolde
licgean lifbysig, būtan his līc swice. (*Beo* 963–6)

⁴ In *Beowulf*, the *ær* (*þon*)-clauses take the subjunctive form of a verb in 252 (‘rather than’), 264, 676, 731, 1371 (‘rather than’), 2818, including the ambiguous 1496.

⁵ When it means ‘except that’, the conjunction *būtan* takes the indicative with reference to a fact, cf. *Beo* 1560.

[I thought to bind him (=Grendel) quickly on his death-bed with a firm grasp so that he would have to lie struggling for life because of my hand-grip, unless his body should escape.]

The *Beowulf* poet used another ‘unless’ conjunction, *nymðe*, which provides two instances with reference to an imaginary or rejected condition:

þæs ne wēndon ær witan Scyldinga,
þæt hit ā mid gemete manna ænig
betlice ond bānfāg tōbreca *meahte*,
listum tōlūcan, *nymþe* līges fæþm
swulge on swaþule. (*Beo* 778–82a)

[The councillors of the Scyldings had not expected before that any man could ever break the splendid and ivory (hall) (=Heorot) in any way, destroy (it) by cunning, unless the embrace of fire should swallow (it) in flame.]

ætrihte *wæs*
gūð getwæfed, *nymðe* mec God *scylde*. (*Beo* 1657b–8)

[The battle would have ended at once, unless God had shielded me.]

In the first passage that described an imaginary or less likely event (i.e. destruction of Heorot), the verbs take the subjunctive forms in the ‘unless’ clause (*swulge*) and in the main clause (*meahte*).⁶ In the second passage, on the other hand, while the morphologically ambiguous *scylde* in the ‘unless’ clause is commonly taken as subjunctive, the verb form of the main clause (i.e. *wæs*) is clearly in indicative mood. Mitchell (*OES*: §3654; 1997: 132) regards the indicative verb of the main clause as a case of “a suppressed apodosis.” Following Mitchell’s observations, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008: 211) state that “despite the indic. verb, the sense must be that the contest *would have* ended immediately but for God’s intervention.” Neither Mitchell nor Fulk, Bjork, and Niles, however, gives any convincing explanation as to why the indicative form *wæs* occurs instead of the normal subjunctive *wære*. But here again the use of the subjunctive would result in metrical anomaly since no Type E verse could be followed by an unstressed syllable:

/ \ x / x
ætrihte wære

⁶ Although the form *meahte* is morphologically ambiguous between the indicative and the subjunctive, most editors take it as the latter. In their glossary, for instance, Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008 regard *meahte* as subjunctive although not excluding the possibility of the indicative.

The Suppression of the Subjunctive in Beowulf

In *Beowulf*, there also occur four instances of ‘unless’ clauses introduced by *nefne/nemne* (variant spellings of *nympe*).⁷ The following passage, which describes the fight between Beowulf and Grendel’s mother, contains an instance of the *nemne*-clause. The quotation has been lightly punctuated in order to avoid biasing interpretation:

Hæfde ðā forstōdod sunu Ecgþeowes
under gynne grund, Gēata cempa,
nemne him heaðobyrne helpe *gefremede*,
herenet hearde ond hālig God
gewēold wīgsigor, wītig drihten,
rodera rædend hit on ryht gescēd
yðelīce syþðan hē eft āstōd. (*Beo* 1550–6)

Some scholars assume that the *nemne*-clause continues till 1554a, with a semi-colon or a period placed after *wīgsigor*.⁸ In his translation of the epic, Crossley-Holland (1999), following this interpretation, regards verses 1553b–4a as part of the subordinate clause governed by *nemne*:

Then the leader of the Geats, Ecgtheow’s son,
would have died far under the wide earth
had not his corslet, his mighty chain-mail,
guarded him, *and had not holy God*
granted him victory; the wise Lord,
Ruler of the Heavens, settled the issue
easily after the hero had scrambled to his feet.
(Italics mine.)

If *gewēold* is taken as parallel with the preceding *gefremede*, however, a grammatical anomaly arises: in the *nemne*-clause, while *gefremede* (although morphologically ambiguous) can be construed as subjunctive, *gewēold* is clearly indicative. In *Beowulf*, all the other instances of the *nefne/nemne*-clause take the subjunctive when referring to open, imaginary or rejected conditions.⁹ Mitchell (*OES*: §3654; 1997: 133) ascribes the use of the indicative form to a suppressed protasis. It is to be recalled here that Mitchell regards the subjunctive in the main clause preceding the *nymðe*-clause (cf. 1657b–8) as a case of a suppressed apodosis where, as noted before, the use of the indicative can be metrically motivated. However, the suspension of the subjunctive in verse 1554a cannot be defended on metrical grounds: hypothetical

⁷ Although Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008 emend MS *næfre* (250) to *næfne*, we follow Robinson 1966 and keep the original reading. *Næfne* (1353) is excluded, which has the meaning of ‘except that’ and takes the indicative with reference to a fact.

⁸ For recent editions that place a semi-colon or a period after *wīgsigor*, see Swanton 1997 and Trask 1997, for instance.

⁹ See *Beo* 1056, 2654, 3054.

$\begin{array}{c} x / x / \backslash x \\ \text{gewēolde wīgsigor} \end{array}$ would belong to expanded Type D with anacrusis with comparable verses attested in *Beowulf*.¹⁰

$\begin{array}{c} x / x \quad / \quad \backslash \quad x \\ \text{Ne sorga, snotor guma} \end{array}$ (*Beo* 1384a)
[Do not grieve, wise man]

$\begin{array}{c} x / x / \quad \backslash \quad x \\ \text{ālætan lændagas} \end{array}$ (*Beo* 2591a)
[(just as each man has to) give up transitory days]

Turning back again to lines 1550–6, Klaeber (1950, 3rd ed.) places a dash before *ond hālig God*, separating 1553b–4a from the preceding *nemne*-clause:

Hæfde ðā forsiðod sunu Ecgpēowes
under gynne grund, Gēata cempa,
nemne him heaðobyrne helpe gefremede,
herenet hearde, – ond hālig God
gewēold wīgsigor; wītig Drihten,
rodera Rædend hit on ryht gescēd
yðelīce, syþðan hē eft āstōd.

This punctuation is adopted by Jack (1994), Mitchell and Robinson (2006), and Slade (2015). Heaney’s translation (2000) is also in accordance with this reading:

The son of Ecgtheow would have surely perished
and the Geats lost their warrior under the wide earth
had the strong links and locks of his war-gear
not helped to save him: *holy God*
decided the victory. It was easy for the Lord,
the Ruler of Heaven, to redress the balance
once Beowulf got back up on his feet.
(Italics mine)

Since God’s settlement of the fight is depicted as an accomplished fact, the punctuation and interpretation above are compatible with the indicative *gewēold*. This is also true for the punctuation proposed by Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008), who place a period after *ond hālig God* with a new sentence starting from 1554a (the translation is taken from Fulk 2010):¹¹

¹⁰ Besides the two instances given, expanded Type D with anacrusis occurs in *Beo* 94a, 724a, 773a 1028a, 1452a, 1454a, 1461a, 1611a, 2629a, 2739a, 2757a, 2937a. See Sievers 1885: 304.

¹¹ According to this reading, the verb *gewēold*, although alliterating with the following *wīgsigor*, should be regarded as metrically unstressed to avoid the breach of Kuhn’s second law that prohibits proclitics like *ge-* from occupying the clause-initial dip. In other words, verse 1554a is taken as Type C so that the alliteration on *gewēold* is not systematic but just ornamental. Kendall (1991: 272) analyzes 1554a as C2.

The Suppression of the Subjunctive in Beowulf

Hæfde ðā forsīðod sunu Ecgþeowes
under gynne grund, Gēata cempa,
nemne him heaðobyrne helpe gefremede,
herenet hearde, ond hālig God.
Gewēold wīgsigor wītig drihten,
rodera rædend; hit on ryht gescēd
yðelīce, syþðan hē eft āstōd.

[Ecgtheo's son would have gone missing then under the cavernous ground, champion of the Geats, if his war-armor had not given him help, the hard combat-net, and holy God. The Lord in his wisdom, architect of the skies, held in his power victory in battle; he settled it with justice, effortlessly, after he stood again.]

The fact that no metrical justification can be offered in favor of the indicative *gewēold* would lead us to accept the punctuation and interpretation that separate *gewēold* from the preceding *nemne*-clause.

Let us now examine whether the suspension of the subjunctive occurs in other verse texts and, if so, why. Besides the two instances in *Beowulf* already discussed, Quirk gives three “unchallenged” instances of the use of the indicative in the *þeah*-clauses:¹²

Swā þū his sorge ne þearft
beran on þīnum brēostum, þær þū gebunden ligst,
murnan on mōde, þæt hēr men būn
þone hēan heofon, *þeah* wit hearmas nū
þrēaweorc *þoliað* (*GenB* 733b–7a)

[So you need not endure the sorrow of it in your bosom, where you lie bound, nor grieve in your mind that here men are occupying the high heaven although we are now suffering harms and misery]

þeah nū ælda bearn
londbūendra lāstas mīne
swīþe *sēcað*, ic swaþe hwīlum
mīne bemīþe monna gehwylcum, (*Rid* 95.10b–13)

[Although the sons of men or land-dwellers, now eagerly look for my tracks, I sometimes hide my footsteps from each of men]

ligeð him behindan
hefig hrūsan dæl, *þeah* hit hwīlan ær
eorðe sio cealde oninnan hire
heold and *hydde* hāliges meahtum. (*Met* 29.51b–4)

¹² For verse texts other than *Beowulf*, instances are cited from Krapp and Dobbie 1931–53.

[(the flame) leaves the weight of the earthly behind it, although for a while the cold earth held and hid it within herself with the holy powers]

In each of the instances above, the *þeah*-clause represents a fact although it takes the subjunctive otherwise in *Genesis B*, the *Riddles*, and the *Meters of Boethius* irrespective of the reality of the concession.¹³ Unlike the cases in *Beowulf*, each verse would be metrically acceptable with the relevant verbs in the subjunctive: *þrēaweorc þolien* Type A2 (cf. *GenB* 737a); *swipe sēcen* Type A (cf. *Rid* 95.12a); *hēolde and hydde* Type A (cf. *Met* 29.54a).

The suspension of the subjunctive in the instances above must therefore possess non-metrical causes. Notice that in *Riddle* 95 and the *Meters of Boethius* the indicative forms of the verbs do not occur in the same verse as headed by *þeah* but are placed relatively distant from the conjunction. This distance might weaken the 'mood' requirement on the verb.¹⁴

In *OES* (§3426), Mitchell added two other instances of suspended subjunctive where the *þeah*-clause represents a fact:

Wine lēofesta, *þeah* ðe wyrmas gýt
gífre grētaþ, nū is þīn gāst cumen,
fægere gefrætewod, of mīnes fæder rīce,
ārum bewunden. (*Soul* 1 135–8a)

[Dearest friend, although the worms still attack you greedily, your spirit has now come from my father's kingdom, beautifully adorned, wrapped in grace.]

þā ic sylf gestāg,
māga in mōdor, *þeah* wæs hyre mægdenhād
æghwæs onwālg. (*Christ* 1418b–20a)

Then I myself came down as a child into a mother, though her virginity was wholly intact.

The hypothetical verses with the relevant verbs in the subjunctive would be metrically acceptable: *gífre grēten* Type A (cf. *Soul* 1 136a); *þeah wære hyre mægdenhād* Type B (cf. *Christ* 1419b).¹⁵ Quirk (1954: 32)

¹³ See Behre 1934: 125–30.

¹⁴ If this is the case, then *gewēold* (*Beo* 1554a), discussed above, could be another instance where the subjunctive is suspended when a few verses intervene between the conjunction *nemne* and the verb.

¹⁵ In both *Christ* and *Soul and Body*, the subjunctive occurs in the *þeah*-clauses: *Christ* 368, 1183, *Soul* 83.

treats with reserve the indicative form in *Soul 1* since *pēah* results from an emendation (*pēah* ðe < MS *ah* ðæ).¹⁶ In *Christ*, the indicative *wæs* immediately follows *pēah* but the inverted verb-subject order would suggest that *pēah* is an adverb (Mitchell, *OES*: §3426).

Turning to 'unless' clauses in other verse texts, those introduced by *nefne/nemne* provide six instances, only one of which takes the verb in the indicative:

Hwonne him eft gebyre weorðe,
hām cymeð, gif hē hāl leofað, *nefne* him holm *gestyreð*,
mere *hafað* mundum mægðegsan wyn. (*Max I* 104b–6)

[When an opportunity occurs again to him (= the sailor), (he will) come home, if he lives whole, unless the sea prevents him, (and) the ocean has the raider's joy (=his ship) in its hands.]

As Mitchell (*OES*: §3653) points out, the same text provides an instance of the *nefne*-clause that takes the subjunctive as normally expected:

Idle hond æmetlan genēah tæfles monnes, þonne teoselum weorpeð.
Seldan in sīdum ceole, *nefne* hē under segle *yrne* (*Max I* 183–4)

[The idle hands of a man do not lack leisure at a board, when he throws the dice. But seldom in a broad ship, unless it is running under sail]

Both of the *nefne*-clauses refer to open conditions where the use of the subjunctive is normal. The occurrence of the indicative in *Max I* (105b–6a) could not be accounted for on metrical grounds: the use of the subjunctive would not alter the metrical pattern of the original verses (*nefne* ^x ^x ^x [/] ^x [/] ^x [/] ^x ^x [/] ^x). The exceptional occurrence of the indicative in *Max I* (105b–6a) could be triggered by the use of the indicative mood in the immediately preceding *gif*-clause that also represents an open condition.¹⁷

According to Behre (1934: 164), the subjunctive is almost mandatory in *ær* (*þon*)-clauses dependent on affirmative main clauses while the use of the indicative is far more common in those dependent on negative main clauses.¹⁸ Thus, we will hereafter focus on the former where

¹⁶ Moffat (1990: 82) reads *ah* *p(e)* and states that "*ah*, i.e., *ac*, is used concessively here with the meaning 'although'."

¹⁷ 'Unless' clauses introduced by *nymðe* and *būtan* do not provide unambiguous instances of the indicative in Old English poetry except when *nymðe* and *būtan* have the meaning of 'except (for/that)'.

¹⁸ Mitchell (*OES*: §2733) provides statistics concerning the use of the *ær* (*þon*)-clauses in the verse texts: of 69 instances of the *ær* (*þon*)-clauses dependent on affirmative main clauses, 46 (66.7%) contain subjunctive verbs, 5 (7.2%) indicative, and 18 (26.1%) ambiguous; of 26 instances of the *ær* (*þon*)-clauses dependent on negative main clauses, 15 (57.7%) contain subjunctive verbs and 11 (42.3%) indicative verbs.

the occurrence of the indicative is exceptional. Besides the already discussed instance in *Beowulf* 2019 (with the *ær*-clause preceded by an affirmative main clause), the Old English poetic corpus provides four other instances of the *ær*-clause with the verb in unambiguously indicative mood. Consider first this passage from *Christ and Satan*:

Gong ricene tō,
ær twā seondon tīda agongene,
þæt ðū merced hūs āmeten hæbbe (*Sat* 707b–9)

[Go to it quickly, so that before two hours have gone, you could have measured the marked abode.]

In the manuscript, *on* is added to *seond* above the line. Krapp and Dobbie (1931–53, vol. 1: 246) state that all editors accept this corrected reading “except Wülker, who retains the MS *seond*, presumably as equivalent to *sind*.” Notice that the use of the subjunctive *sīen* would result in too short a verse of three syllables (*ær twā sīen*) unless the uncontracted (i.e. disyllabic) form of *sīen* is assumed (cf. *Beo* 682, 1831, 2649). The use of the disyllabic *seondon*, on the other hand, provides a normal verse of four syllables.¹⁹

Next to be examined is the following quotation from Cynewulf’s *Elene*, where the *ær*-clause dependent on an affirmative main clause anomalously contains an indicative verb:²⁰

Ic wæs weorcum fāh,
synnum āsæled, sorgum gewæled,
bitrum gebunden, bisgum beþrunge,
ær mē lāre onlāg þurh lēohtne hād
gamelum to gēoce ... (*El* 1242b–6a)

[I was guilty with my deeds, bound with my sins, afflicted with sorrows, bitterly bound, oppressed with afflictions, before (God) gave me instruction in light form as help to an old (man)]

Notice that the passage above is part of the epilogue of *Elene* (ll. 1236–50) where rhyme between an on-verse and an off-verse is remarkably frequent. In line 1245, the on-verse final *onlāg* forms a partial rhyme with the off-verse final *had*. This would suggest that Cynewulf used the indicative form *onlāg* for the sake of rhyme; the subjunctive *onlige* would not have provided rhyme. Interestingly,

¹⁹ Monosyllabic *seond* would have been corrected to disyllabic *seondon* because with the former reading verse 708a would result in a short verse of only three syllables (*ær twā seond*).

²⁰ In *Elene* (676b), the *ær*-clause that depends on the affirmative main clause takes the subjunctive.

rhyme seems also to be responsible for the use of the indicative in the *ær*-clause in the *Riming Poem* (80) where the indicative *geþenceð* rhymes with *swenceð*:²¹

Ær þæt ēadig *geþenceð*, hē hine þe oftor *swenceð*,
byrgeð him þā bitran synne, hogap tō þære betran wynne (*Rim* 80–1)

[Before the blessed man thinks about that, he more often undertakes penance (and) keeps off the bitter sin (and) thinks about the better joy]

Let us finally consider the *ær*-clause containing the indicative verb in *Riddle* 65 with the whole passage quoted:

Cwico wæs ic, ne cwæð ic wiht, cwele ic efne seþeah.
Ær ic wæs, eft ic cwōm. Æghwā mec rēafað,
hafað mec on headre, ond mīn hēafod scīreþ,
bīteð mec on bær līc, briceð mīne wīsan.
Monnan ic ne bīte, nympe hē mē bīte;
sindan þāra monige þe mec bītað. (*Rid* 65.1–6)

[I was alive, I did not speak at all, but I (will) die. Before I existed, I came back. Everyone robs me, has me in restraint, and cuts off my head, bites my bare body, breaks my sprout. I bite no man, unless he bites me. (There) are many of them who bite me.]

This riddle shows an abundant use of syntactic parallelism ('V' and 'NP' stand for verb and noun phrase respectively): both verses 1a (*ne cwæð ic wiht*) and 1b (*cwele ic efne seþeah*) share the structure of 'V ic adv'; both 3a (*hafað mec on headre*) and 4a (*bīteð mec on bær līc*) have a similar structure like 'V mec on NP'. In addition, *ær ic wæs* (2a) looks parallel to *eft ic cwōm* (2a) with the structure 'x ic V'. This would lead us to assume that *ær* would better be construed as an adverb like *eft*. If we follow this interpretation, we no longer have to take *ær ic wæs* (*Rid* 65.2) as an exceptional case where the indicative verb occurs in an *ær*-clause dependent on the affirmative main clause.

In the present essay, we have considered how and why the use of the subjunctive is suppressed in Old English verse texts. The occurrence of the indicative in contexts where the subjunctive is normally required can be triggered by the formal similarity between indicative and subjunctive that often happens in Old English due to the decline of inflectional endings. The *Beowulf* poet is unique in that he always suppressed the use of the subjunctive for the sake of meter while

²¹ Although Mitchell (*OES*: §2733) suggests that *ær* may be an adverb, the word order in verse 80a points to the analysis of *ær* as a conjunction.

the suppression seems to occur in other poems both for metrical and non-metrical reasons. A question now arises as to whether there are cases in which the subjunctive is used in contexts where the indicative is required. Indeed, such an instance is attested in lines 117–18 of the *Battle of Maldon*:

Gehyrde ic þæt Eadweard āne slōge
swiðe mid his swurde, swenges ne wyrnde

[I heard that Edward fiercely struck one with his sword, (he) did not withhold the stroke]

The *þæt*-clause introduced by *gehyrde* contains two verbs with *slōge* being unambiguously subjunctive and *wyrnde* being either subjunctive or indicative. The latter is generally taken as third singular indicative preterite since the verb (*ge*)*hýran* usually requires the indicative in the object clause. As Mitchell (*OES*: §2020) notes, however, the form *slōge* is the only unambiguous instance of the subjunctive after (*ge*)*hýran* in the poetic corpus. The anomalous use of subjunctive *slōge* here is probably motivated by metrical considerations: the indicative *slōg* (pret. 3sg.) would make verse 117b too short (*āne slōg*).

The use of the subjunctive in contexts where the indicative is required, however, is rather rare: a cursory examination of *Beowulf*, for instance, provides no such instances. Thus, the switching between indicative and subjunctive seems not to be bilateral. This asymmetry could be due to the fact that the subjunctive has a marked or colored meaning while the indicative is unmarked or neutral. The unilateral direction of switching naturally anticipated the gradual replacement of the subjunctive form by the indicative, driving the former to the verge of extinction in the English language.

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Metrical Complexity and Verse Placement in *Beowulf*

Geoffrey Russom

Fulk (2007) emphasizes the importance of probabilistic reasoning for analysis of Old English meter. Accepting all manuscript verses as authentic would burden a metrical theory with false evidence, blurring important distinctions and obstructing important discoveries. Doubtful verse patterns with low frequency should be excluded from consideration during initial attempts to formulate a theory. As an inherently plausible theory is refined, it may accept some anomalies as rare but acceptable departures from metrical norms. It is unimaginable, however, that a valid theory would accept all manuscript verses.

Here I would like to recommend a kind of probabilistic reasoning that goes beyond questions of what does or does not occur. As Halle and Keyser have observed, a poet's audience is "capable of distinguishing not only metrical from unmetrical lines but also more complex metrical lines from less complex lines" (1971: 142). Ideally, a theory of meter will posit gradations of complexity among acceptable lines and the most complex lines should have the most restricted frequencies (Hayes, Wilson, and Shisko 2012). In Old English meter, which defines acceptable stress patterns at the level of the verse (or half-line), theorists will also want to consider how the metrical complexity of a verse affects its placement within the line. Besides providing a more comprehensive account of the meter, a theory sufficiently robust to predict the distribution of verse types and their various linguistic realizations will depend less crucially on the precision of scribes.

One aid to assessment of metrical complexity is the universal principle of closure: adherence to metrical norms becomes stricter toward the end of a metrical unit (Hayes 1983: 373). Applied to Old English poetry, this principle predicts that the closing half of the alliterative line (the b-verse) should be less complex than the opening half (the a-verse). Complex verses should be identifiable not only because they have restricted frequency but also because they tend to occur in the opening half of the line. Even with this valuable aid, it is no simple task to isolate the influence of a metrical norm. There are several important norms and they apply within a wide variety of verse types. When

these norms exert conflicting influence on verse placement, some of them have more influence than others.

It will be convenient to exclude verses that require long explanations because so many complex features affect their placement. Here we will focus on ordinary realizations of types A, B, C, D, and E, setting aside type A2, type A3, hypermetrical types, “expanded” D types, and verses of types A, D, or E to which extrametrical unstressed syllables have been added. I also exclude verses in which a short stressed syllable is “resolved” with a following unstressed syllable to create the equivalent of a long stressed syllable (Russom 1998: 97–117).

Our analysis will be formulated within the word-foot theory of Old English meter (Russom 1987, 1998). This theory imposes certain general requirements. The verse must have two metrical feet and each foot must have the pattern of an Old English word. The line consists of two acceptable verses. Though conceptually simple, the rule for the foot sanctions a wide variety of patterns. There are trochaic Sx feet with the pattern of words like *drýhten* ‘lord,’ dactylic Sxx feet with the pattern of words like *béaldode* ‘he encouraged,’ and S feet with the pattern of stressed monosyllables like *gōd* ‘good.’ The system includes light x feet with the pattern of unstressed monosyllables like *ond* ‘and’ and light xx feet with the pattern of unstressed disyllables like *oppe* ‘or.’ Finally, there are heavy feet corresponding to compounds and derivatives with two stresses like *féoh-gift* ‘treasure-gift’ (Ss), *sórhfulne* ‘sorrowful’ (Ssx), *míddan-gèard* ‘middle earth’ (Sxs), and *sibbe-gedrýht* ‘kindred band’ (Sxxs). Upper-case S in foot notations represents a metrical position normally occupied by a syllable with primary word stress. Lower-case s represents a position normally occupied by a syllable with subordinate word stress. Lower-case x represents a position normally occupied by an unstressed syllable.

The norms of special interest here are itemized below as N1–N7. Verses and lines are optimal to the extent that they adhere to N1–N7. These norms can also be conceived as metrical rules that permit exceptions at a cost in complexity.¹ N1–N7 date from the prehistoric era in which the meter first arose, before the Germanic languages had differentiated significantly from one another (Russom 1998: 1–3).

- N1. An optimal line has the falling prominence contour of a typical sentence in late Proto-Germanic, in which prominent words such as lexical nouns and adjectives precede a finite verb

¹ Optimality Theory (OT) adopts a similar approach to problems of linguistic form, employing violable rules that differ in strength and may conflict with one another (Kager 1999; Kiparsky 2010a, 2010b). Hayes (2012) employs “maxent grammar” to quantify metrical observations of Kiparsky (1973, 1977), assigning various strengths to conflicting poetic norms and calculating a total complexity for each line of iambic pentameter. I owe thanks to Hayes and Kiparsky for answering questions about their current research.

with less prominent phrasal stress.² The finite verb normally appears in a line-final location where words are not permitted to alliterate.

- N2. Foot patterns are based on word patterns and the foot is normally realized as a single word.
- N3. The optimal foot pattern (Sx) corresponds to the most common word pattern, with a root syllable of primary word stress followed by an unstressed inflectional syllable. Foot patterns based on less common word patterns add to the complexity of verse types and the added complexity increases as the frequency of the word pattern declines.
- N4. The optimal verse pattern (Sx/Sx, type A1) consists of two optimal feet.
- N5. A verse normally has two primary word stresses.
- N6. A verse normally has the falling rhythm of a typical two-stress phrase in late Proto-Germanic, with the second stress subordinated at phrase level.
- N7. When a foot corresponding to a compound has an unusually prominent syllable on its s position, the subordinate metrical prominence of this syllable is indicated by alliteration on the first stressed syllable of the foot, which occupies the S position and has the greater metrical prominence.³

N1–N7 can have distinct effects but all of them follow from the core hypotheses of the word-foot theory: (1) that metrical units are based on linguistic units and (2) that the verse and the line have a binary structure, with two feet in each verse and two verses in each line. N1 and N7 also presuppose a link between alliteration and metrical prominence but this is a poetic universal rather than a peculiarity of Old English meter.

We consider first the distributions of type A1 (Sx/Sx) and type E (Ssx/S). In items 1a–f, the notation for the verse type is followed by the

² A falling prominence contour is characteristic of languages with subject-object-verb word order (Dryer 2007). Evidence for SOV order in late Proto-Germanic comes from runic inscriptions that include the oldest surviving line of Germanic alliterative poetry (Antonsen 1975). Lexical nouns and adjectives are those of ordinary frequency, as distinct from pronouns and demonstratives, which have very high frequency and low prominence within a typical phrase.

³ Alliteration “seems to be found as an obligatory formal element only in languages where the stress regularly falls on the same syllable in the word, which then must be the alliterating syllable” (Kiparsky 1973: 231). Because of this universal link to stress, alliteration provides an effective marker for metrical prominence. Proto-Germanic had variable stress placement until the latter half of the first millennium BCE. Alliterative meter must have emerged during the late Proto-Germanic era, after the consolidation of fixed initial stress. With regard to unusually prominent stress on the secondary constituents of poetic compounds, see Russom 1987: 92–7.

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number of a-verses (to the left of the colon) and the number of b-verses (to the right). Percentages in boldface show the relative frequency of b-verses. A slash represents the boundary between feet. All verses used as evidence come from *Beowulf* and are cited from Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008), with suppression of diacritics not required for scansion.

(1)	(a) <i>mǣre</i> / <i>pēoden</i> (1715a) 'famous prince'	Sx/Sx (232:203)	47%
	(b) <i>hȳran</i> / <i>scolde</i> (10b) 'should obey'	Sx/Sx (7:70)	90%
	(c) <i>bēagas</i> / <i>dǣlde</i> (80b) 'dealt out rings'	Sx/Sx (21:101)	82%
	(d) <i>dryhtmāðma</i> / <i>dǣl</i> (2843a) 'a share of noble treasures'	Ssx/S (46:35)	43%
	(e) <i>mundbora</i> / <i>wæs</i> (2779b) 'was the protector'	Ssx/S (0:8)	100%
	(f) <i>Gūðbyrne</i> / <i>scān</i> (321b) 'The war-corselet shone'	Ssx/S (5:35)	87%

Items 1a–f all realize each foot as a single word, adhering to N2. Items 1a–c also have optimal foot patterns and verse patterns, adhering to N3, N4, and N5. Item 1a has a prominently stressed word in final position, however, violating N6. In the b-verse, the prominent second word of 1a would also contravene N1, which defines weakly stressed verbs as optimal in the non-alliterating location at the end of the line. Item 1a is an optimal variant in important respects but N1 and N6 have sufficient influence to place a slight majority of such variants in the a-verse.⁴ Adherence to all relevant norms (N1–N6) has a dramatic effect on placement of type A1. The attraction to the b-verse is strongest for variants like 1b, which end with a finite auxiliary verb. Such auxiliaries have very high frequency in Old English and correspondingly low prominence. A slightly weaker effect is exerted by line-final placement of variants like 1c, with a somewhat more prominent finite main verb. For the type E verses represented by items 1d–f, the sample of two-word variants is small but the trends appear to be similar: a slight preponderance in the a-verse for variants ending with a prominent word, extremely high frequency in the b-verse for variants ending with a finite auxiliary verb, and slightly lower frequency in the b-verse for variants ending with a finite main verb.

⁴ I use the term *variant* for any distinct realization of a verse pattern with linguistic material, including the two-word variant.

As items 2a–b demonstrate, an attraction to the b-verse is also created by words that have a light phrasal stress in archaic final position, such as function words and postpositions (prepositions placed after the noun they modify, as in 2b). Verse-final placement of such words adheres to N6.

(2)	(a) <i>ealdor</i> / <i>ðinne</i> (1848b) 'thy lord'	Sx/Sx (5:17)	77%
	(b) <i>mancynne</i> / <i>fram</i> (110b) 'from mankind'	Ssx/S (0:21)	100%

Since the suitability of a stressed word for alliteration is directly related to its phrase-level prominence, light phrasal stress is ideally suited to a position where stress is required but alliteration is unacceptable.⁵

As verbal nouns and adjectives, infinitives and participles have more prominent phrasal stress than finite verbs and create a weaker attraction to the b-verse in an informative sample of verses like 3a–b.

(3)	(a) <i>gomban</i> / <i>gyldan</i> (11a) 'to yield tribute'	Sx/Sx (33:30)	48%
	(b) <i>mærdō</i> / <i>mæned</i> (857a) 'glory declared'	Sx/Sx (4:5)	56%
	(c) <i>nīðwundor</i> / <i>sēon</i> (1365b) 'to see a dangerous wonder'	Ssx/S (0:1)	100%
	(d) <i>undyrne</i> / <i>cūð</i> (150b, 410b) 'openly known'	Ssx/S (0:2)	100%

Most of these verses have archaic word order, with the non-finite verb placed after its direct object. Since infinitives and past participles are somewhat less prominent than lexical nouns or adjectives, such verses have falling rhythm, adhering to N6 in this respect. The higher percentages for 3c–d may be due to the small size of the type E sample.

Realization of the foot as a word group violates N2, restricting total frequency and the relative frequency of b-verses. In the notations for verse patterns, a word boundary internal to the foot is represented with a colon.

(4)	(a) <i>grim ond</i> / <i>grædig</i> (121a) 'grim and greedy'	S:x/Sx (86:25)	23%
	(b) <i>gýt ic</i> / <i>wylle</i> (2512b) 'yet I will'	S:x/Sx (0:3)	100%

⁵ When a verse or compound foot contains two stressed words with differing phrase-level prominence, the more prominent word normally stands first and has priority for alliteration (cf. Sievers 1893: 41–6).

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(c) <i>forð on-/sendon</i> (45b) 'sent forth'	S:x/Sx (8:43)	84%
(d) <i>twelf wintra / tid</i> (147a) 'twelve winters' time'	S:sx/S (2:1)	33%
(e) <i>eft sōna / bið</i> (1762b) 'soon afterwards it shall be'	S:sx/S (0:1)	100%
(f) <i>fēa worda / cwæð</i> (2246b) 'spoke a few words'	S:sx/S (0:4)	100%

The variant represented by 4a, with a prominent noun or adjective in final position, has a total frequency of 111 instances, as compared with 435 instances for the corresponding two-word variant, item 1a. Variants like 4a appear in the b-verse only half as frequently as the two-word variant. The effect of violating N2 is overridden in variants like 4b–c by placement of a weakly stressed verb in final position, which creates the optimal line contour specified in N1. When N1 conflicts with N2, N1 exerts greater influence on verse placement. The small type E sample represented by 4c–e has a similar distribution.

Two-word E verses like item 1d, with a third stress of significant prominence, are heavy relative to the type A1 norm and have a b-verse frequency of 47%. When the Ssx foot is realized as a compound proper name, the stress on the s position is lighter (Russom 1987: 97). The verse then comes closer to optimal weight and the relative frequency of b-verses is enhanced.

(5) (a) <i>Hrōþgāres / scop</i> (1066b) 'Hrothgar's poet'	Ssx/S (2:6)	75%
(b) <i>Bēowulfe / wearð</i> (818b) 'For Beowulf became'	Ssx/S (0:6)	100%
(c) <i>Frēslondum / on</i> (2357b) 'in Frisian lands'	Ssx/S (0:1)	100%

Like item 1d, variants like 5a have prominent phrasal stress in the S foot, but their closer approximation to normal weight in the Ssx foot attracts most instances to the b-verse. The attraction seems stronger, as expected, for variants ending with a weakly stressed verb (5b) or a weakly stressed function word in archaic final position (5c).

Type Da employs the same foot patterns as type E but in opposite order. Many two-word Da variants contain an Ssx compound with a prominent third stress that makes them heavy relative to the type A1 norm.

(6)	(a) <i>scearp / scyldwiga</i> (288a) 'keen shield-warrior'	S/Ssx (27:11)	29%
	(b) <i>sweord / Biowulfes</i> (2681b) 'Beowulf's sword'	S/Ssx (10:14)	58%
	(c) <i>secg / wísade</i> (208b) 'the man led the way'	S/Sxx (0:38)	100%
	(d) <i>leng / sorgian</i> (451b) 'to mourn long'	S/Sxx (5:19)	79%

The heaviest two-word Da variants are those like item 6a with a prominent noun or adjective root on the s position. The secondary constituent *wiga* 'warrior' appears elsewhere in the poem as an independent noun with primary word stress and clearly maintains its independent meaning in *scyldwiga* (which has the same denotation as *wiga*). In 6a and many of the a-verses like it, the Ssx constituent is identifiable as a redundant or metaphorical compound of a kind rare or absent in prose (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: cxii). Because such compounds were not used in ordinary speech, their secondary constituents retained unusual prominence.⁶ Da variants with poetic compounds are always placed in the a-verse, where the subordinate character of the secondary constituent can be emphasized by alliteration on the first constituent of the compound (N7). No poetic compound appears in any of the 11 b-verses otherwise similar to item 6a. An Ssx proper name brings Da variants like 6b closer to standard weight and increases the relative frequency of b-verses. Item 6c ends with a weak class II finite verb that has no stress on its open medial syllable (Russom 1998: 114–16). This verse represents a light D subtype with the same optimal weight as type A1. Adherence to N1, N2, N5, and N6 attracts all variants like item 6c to the b-verse. The attraction is less strong for variants like 6d with a somewhat more prominent infinitive in final position.

Most two-word realizations of type C are like item 7a, which has one syllable with primary word stress and one syllable with secondary word stress. Such realizations are light relative to the type A1 norm of two primary word stresses (N5) and this element of complexity attracts them to the a-verse.

⁶ Several kinds of reduction can occur in frequently used compounds that are no longer apprehended as two constituents with independent meanings. The word *cupboard*, which no longer signifies a board for cups, has lost [p] from its primary constituent and its secondary constituent *board*, though preserved in the spelling, has undergone loss of secondary stress and reduction of its vowel to schwa, a vowel characteristic of unstressed syllables.

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(7)	(a) <i>on / bēorsele</i> (492a) 'in the beer-hall'	(x)x/Ssx (223:81)	27%
	(b) <i>Swā wæs / Bīowulfe</i> (3066a) 'So it was for Beowulf'	(x)x/Ssx (26:9)	26%
	(c) <i>Swā / rīxode</i> (144a) 'thus he prevailed'	(x)x/Sxx (11:5)	31%
	(e) <i>Gewāt ðā / nēosian</i> (115a) 'then he went to seek out'	(x)x/Sxx (1:0)	0%

In types A, D, and E, extrametrical syllables create a significant attraction to the a-verse, obscuring other factors of interest. In types B and C, extrametrical syllables are much more common and exert much weaker influence on verse placement (Russom 1987: 33–8). We can obtain larger samples for these types by including variants with more than one unstressed word in the verse-initial “dip.” Dips of varying size before the first stress in types B and C will be notated collectively as (x)x. In type Da, as the examples in item 6 have shown, reduction of stress on the s position of the Ssx foot makes the verse less abnormally heavy and creates an attraction to the b-verse. In type C, reduction of stress on the s position makes the verse more abnormally light. The low frequency of b-verses like 7a does not rise for variants like 7b with an Ssx proper name. In light D variants like 6c, all of which are b-verses, the Sxx finite verb stands in a non-alliterating position and satisfies N1. In light C variants like 7c, the Sxx verb stands in a position where it must alliterate, contravening N1, and most instances appear in the a-verse. Item 7e is the only relevant instance of light type C with an Sxx infinitive. It may not be authentic (see Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: App. C: §18, 31).

In Da variants like item 8a, the Ssx foot is realized as a word group rather than as a single word, violating N2.

(8)	(a) <i>folc / tō sægōn</i> (1422b) 'the people looked on'	S/S:sx (0:2)	100%
	(b) <i>bōt / eft cuman</i> (281b) 'for a remedy to come in turn'	S/S:sx (0:2)	100%
	(c) <i>heard / hēr cūmen</i> (376a) 'the bold (one) having come here'	S/S:sx (1:1)	50%
	(d) <i>bær / (on) bearm scipes</i> (896a, cf. 1485a) 'bore into the interior of the ship'	S/(x)S:sx (2:0)	0%

(e) <i>scencte / scīr wered</i> (496a, cf. 1904a, 2018a) 'poured the bright drink'	Sx/S:sx (3:0)	0%
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In addition to violating N2, such variants have a third primary word stress, a violation of N5 that further restricts total frequency. Employment of a word group in the Ssx foot allows for placement of a finite verb in final position, however, creating the usual attraction to the b-verse for variants like item 8a. Da variants ending with an infinitive have the same distribution, but one of the two variants ending in a past participle is an a-verse with double alliteration. The word groups occupying the second foot in items 8a–c are very much like compound words. A prepositional adverb forms a closely bound unit with a following verb, adjective, or adverb that Campbell refers to as a “quasi-compound” (1959: 36). Examples with a lexical noun or adjective on the s position do not occur within our restricted corpus of Da verses. By removing all restrictions, we can obtain two examples like 8d with extrametrical words and another three like 8e in expanded type Da. In all five of these examples, metrical subordination of the linguistically prominent syllable on the s position is clearly indicated by an alliterating syllable on the preceding S position. An additional attraction to the a-verse is created in 8d by the parenthesized extrametrical word and in 8e by the abnormal length of expanded Da.

In type C, a word group occupying the Ssx foot provides a second primary word stress and brings the verse up to optimal weight.

(9) (a) <i>on / bearm scipes</i> (35b) 'into the interior of the ship'	(x)x/S:sx (34:91)	72%
(b) <i>on / sǣ wæron</i> (544b) 'were at sea'	(x)x/S:sx (3:53)	95%
(c) <i>on / wang stigon</i> (225b) 'disembarked onto the shore'	(x)x/S:sx (16:111)	87%
(d) <i>tō / hām faran</i> (124b) 'to go home'	(x)x/S:sx (6:33)	85%
(e) <i>on / flet boren</i> (1647b) 'carried onto the hall floor'	(x)x/S:sx (1:22)	96%

Variants like 9a–e have a second primary word stress and all of these variants have high relative frequency in the b-verse. The frequency of b-verses is further elevated when the second primary word stress is subordinated within the phrase, as in variants with weakly stressed finite verbs (9b–c). Such variants illustrate the distinct effects of word

stress, which determines verse weight, and phrasal stress, which determines the prominence contour of the line.⁷ The relative frequency of b-verses is also elevated for variants ending with an infinitive or participle in archaic final position, as in 9d–e. Infinitives and participles have more prominent phrasal stress than finite verbs but less prominent phrasal stress than lexical nouns or adjectives.

In type B, the second foot usually has the pattern Sxs.

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|--|------------------|-------------|
| (10) (a) <i>Swā / giōmormōd</i> (2267a)
'thus sad-hearted' | (x)x/Sxs (34:39) | 53% |
| (b) <i>Donon / yðgeblond</i> (1373a)
'thence the wave-tumult
(rises up)' | (x)x/Sxs (3:2) | 40% |
| (c) <i>Scolde his / aldorgedāl</i> (805b)
'his life-end would (be
wretched)' | (x)x/Sxxs (0:1) | 100% |

The Sxs pattern occurs in compounds like *giōmor-mōd* with a trochaic first constituent and in compounds like *yð-ge-blond* with an unstressed internal prefix (an *infix* in technical idiom). Less often, the second foot has the pattern Sxxs, which occurs in compounds like *aldor-gedāl* with a trochaic first constituent and an unstressed infix as well. In type B, as in type C, variants realizing the second foot as a compound are light, with one primary stress and one secondary stress. Despite their optimal realization of the compound foot (N2), two-word type B variants are not significantly attracted to the b-verse. The count for variants like 10a includes five instances with Sxs proper names, three of which are a-verses. The anomalous frequency for 10c can be attributed to sample size.⁸

The rule for Old English foot patterns is conceptually simple: any native word pattern qualifies as a foot pattern. The price to be paid for such simplicity is employment of feet corresponding to unusual words. Sxs compounds have lower frequency than Ssx compounds and Sxxs compounds have very low frequency. Optimal realization of the compound foot is more difficult to achieve in type B than in the otherwise similar type C, which employs the most common compound pattern, Ssx. The poet compensates for the lower frequency of two-word realizations in type B by employing Sxs and Sxxs word groups that imitate the structure of the corresponding compounds (Russom 1998: 53).

⁷ On the importance of distinguishing word stress from phrasal stress in linguistic theory, see Kiparsky 2010b.

⁸ There would be no sample at all if *aldorgedāl* had its archaic value Sxs (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 326).

(11)	(a) <i>purh / drihtnes miht</i> (940a) 'by the Lord's might'	WW(x)x/Sx:s (77:123)	62%
	(b) <i>Nū is se / rǣd gelang</i> (1376b) 'now the decision rests'	(x)x/S:x-s (1:1)	50%
	(c) <i>mid his / eorla gedriht</i> (357b) 'with his retinue of earls'	(x)x/Sx:x-s (13:10)	43%
	(d) <i>sipðan / morgen bið</i> (1784b) 'after it is morning'	(x)x/Sx:s (9:61)	87%
	(e) <i>on / lande stōd</i> (1913b) 'stood on land'	(x)x/Sx:s (11:138)	93%
	(f) <i>hie / wyrd forswēop</i> (477b) 'fate swept them away'	(x)x/S:x-s (15:97)	87%
	(g) <i>Sum / sære angeald</i> (1251b) 'Someone paid sorely'	(x)x/Sx:x-s (17:68)	80%

In 11a, the word group in the second foot imitates the structure of compounds like *giōmor-mōd*, with a trochaic constituent followed by a stressed monosyllable. In 11b, the Sxs word group ends with a prefixed monosyllable, imitating the structure of compound words like *ȝð-geblond*. In 11c, the word group imitates the structure of compounds like *aldor-gedal*. In notations for type B variants with foot-internal prefixes, the boundary between prefix and root is indicated by a hyphen. Realization of the Sxs foot as a word group adds a second primary word stress in 11a, bringing this variant up to optimal weight. The b-verse frequency for 11a is higher than for 10a, the two-word realization of type B. The smaller b-verse frequency for variants like 11c can be attributed to the greater complexity of the Sxxs foot pattern (as defined in N3), which creates an independent attraction to the a-verse. As usual, the attraction to the b-verse is enhanced by placement of a finite auxiliary or main verb in final position, as in 11d-g. Variants with infinitives and participles are not common in this verse type and are excluded for convenience.

Feet with the patterns Sxs and Sxxs make type Db more complex than type Da.

(12)	(a) <i>hār / hilderinc</i> (1307a) 'old battle-warrior'	S/Sxs (17:2)	11%
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(b) <i>flet</i> / <i>innanweard</i> (1976b, cf. 991b) 'the floor inside'	S/Sxs	
(c) <i>sēon</i> / <i>sibbedriht</i> (387a, cf. 2774a) 'to see the kindred band'	S/Sxss (2:0)	0%

The two b-verses, represented by item 12b, exhibit a sharp frequency drop relative to two-word b-verses of type Da (cf. item 7). The two S/Sxs b-verses both realize the Sxs foot as *innanweard*, with the s position occupied by *-weard*. This is still a separable word in Old English, unlike its modern descendant *-ward* in *inward*. Though not fully developed into a suffix, Old English *weard* often functions like a suffix and would be expected to undergo reduction of its secondary stress in words like *innanweard*. Reduced stress on the s position would make variants like 12b less abnormally heavy and more appropriate to the b-verse. A two-word Db variant with a compound proper name would be equally appropriate to the b-verse but no relevant examples happen to occur.⁹ Two-word realizations of the pattern S/Sxss (12c) occur only in the a-verse.¹⁰

A word group in the second foot makes type Db even more abnormally heavy but also allows for verse-final placement of a finite verb.

(13) (a) <i>frōd</i> / <i>folces weard</i> (2513a) 'old guardian of the people'	S/Sx:s (2:0)	0%
(b) <i>Hygd</i> / <i>swīðe geong</i> (1926b, cf. 2721b) 'Hygd (was) very young'	S/Sx:s (0:2)	100%
(c) <i>God</i> / <i>ēape mæg</i> (478b) 'God easily may'	S/Sx:s (0:2)	100%
(d) <i>blæd</i> / <i>wīde sprang</i> (18b) 'fame spread widely'	S/Sx:s (2:24)	92%
(e) <i>līf</i> / <i>ēac gesceōp</i> (97b) 'he also created life'	S/S:x-s (1:24)	96%
(f) <i>word</i> / <i>inne ābēad</i> (390b) 'uttered words from inside'	S/Sx:x-s (0:10)	100%

The variants like item 13a have three primary word stresses and a noun or adjective with prominent phrasal stress in final position. Both such

⁹ The only Db verse with an Sxs proper name is *Beowulf* 1114a, with an extrametrical word before the second foot that creates an attraction to the a-verse.

¹⁰ See Russom 1987: 91 with regard to the genitive compound *entageweorc* in *Beowulf* 2774a.

variants appear in the a-verse, with alliteration on the first word of the second foot to show that the following word is metrically subordinate. In the two variants like 13b, the Sxs word group is a quasi-compound with a less prominently stressed constituent in final position. Both instances are b-verses. In 13c–f, a weakly stressed finite verb attracts type Db variants to the closing half of the line. In most of these, the Sxs word group is a quasi-compound with an adverb in close syntactic composition with the verb.

When viewed from the perspective of late Proto-Germanic, Old English meter is natural and intuitively simple. Feet optimally correspond to words, verses to small phrases, and lines to sentences. Foot patterns are based on word patterns, a verse pattern is an ordered pair of foot patterns within a phrase, and a line is an ordered pair of verse patterns. The weight of a verse is measured as the combined weight of its foot patterns and the optimal verse weight is the weight of two optimal feet. Optimal line patterns are based on optimal patterns of late Proto-Germanic phrasal stress, with the more prominent constituent standing first within each verse phrase and a weakly stressed constituent at the end of the line.

One might imagine that all norms would have comparable effects on verse placement. Yet N1, the norm for the prominence contour of the line, exerts stronger influence than N5, the norm for verse weight. The strength disparity is obvious in heavy type D variants with a word group in the compound foot (items 8 and 11), which violate N5 but are attracted to the b-verse when they adhere to N1. N5 governs weight at verse level and violation of N5 has two distinct effects. The primary effect is to increase the complexity of a variant and restrict its total frequency (the sum of its a-verse and b-verse instances). The secondary effect is a response to the increased complexity by the principle of closure, which restricts frequency in the b-verse. N1 governs the prominence contour of the line and adherence to N1 has a single relevant effect, to reduce the complexity of the line. This primary effect does not involve the principle of closure and it registers as a rise in total frequency for lines with the optimal prominence contour. The primary effect of N1 overrides the secondary effect of N5.

The effect of adherence to N5 becomes conspicuous in type B and C variants with two primary word stresses (items 9 and 11), which are attracted to the b-verse even though they realize the compound foot as a word group, violating N2. To explain the greater strength of N5 we can distinguish primary effects from secondary effects within the smaller relevant domains. N2 governs the foot and violation of N2 has the primary effect of increasing foot complexity. The secondary effect is to increase verse complexity, which restricts total frequency. N5 governs the verse and adherence to N5 has one relevant effect at verse level: to diminish the complexity of a variant and enhance its total

frequency. When the principle of closure applies at line level in types B and C, the diminished verse-level complexity resulting from adherence to N5 overrides the foot-level complexity resulting from violation of N2. Adherence to N5 in these types creates a strong attraction to the b-verse but the violation of N2 has little remaining influence. To sum up: within its proper domain, a norm exerts stronger influence than a norm that governs a smaller sub-domain. This natural principle could be acquired by intuition and provides coherent management of violable rules within the verse and the line. In poetry as in ordinary language, coherent organization allows internalized rule systems of significant complexity to operate in real time with the necessary speed (Dresher and Lahiri 1991).

Adherence to N2 has a conspicuous effect at line level when conflict with N5 is factored out. Among type A1 verses with a prominent second stress, as we have seen, the b-verse frequency for two-word variants is about twice as high as for variants that realize the first foot as a word group, violating N2 (compare items 1a and 4a). Since both variants violate N5, the violation of N2 is not overridden and adds to total verse complexity, further restricting the frequency of b-verses. Frequencies for both variants are below 50% because they both have a prominent second stress that violates N1. As we have observed, variants that violate N2 also have a much lower total frequency (111:435).

Factoring out conflict with higher-level norms is more difficult for verse types with smaller samples. In several of these, however, total frequencies provide ample evidence for the strength of N2. Up to now, we have used the principle of closure to assess the significance of relative frequency in the b-verse. To assess the significance of total frequency, we need to know what frequency a two-word variant would be likely to have in a text not governed by metrical rules.

Because Old English verses are realized so consistently as phrases, we can compare frequencies for two-word realizations of verse types with the corresponding frequencies for two-word prose phrases. Useful texts for comparison are two narratives with heroic content from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The prose candidate, *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*, narrates an event that took place in AD 757. Its earliest manuscript has been dated to about AD 900.¹¹ The poetic candidate, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, narrates an event that took place in AD 937.¹² Our analysis will focus on types A, D, and E, which are subject to the strictest constraints on employment of extrametrical syllables. I exclude types A3,

¹¹ Cited from Cassidy and Ringler (1971: 138–42), who provide dating information and a convenient glossary with line-number references.

¹² Cassidy and Ringler 1971: 162–7. Use of the same editors for both texts provides consistent word division for comparative word counts.

B, and C from consideration because extrametrical words sometimes reduce complexity in these types and their minimal two-word expressions are less highly valued by the poet (Russom 1987: 38). Since we are focusing on total frequency rather than on verse placement within the line, we can obtain a larger sample by including variants with resolved syllables, type A2, expanded type Da, and expanded type Db.

In the prose narrative, which contains about 450 words, there are no more than four instances of two-word type A1.

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|--|-------|
| (14) (a) <i>ānne æþeling</i> ‘a nobleman’ | Sx/Sx |
| (b) <i>lytle werode</i> ‘with a small troop’ | Sx/Sx |
| (c) <i>lēofra nāre</i> ‘was not dearer’ | Sx/Sx |
| (d) <i>folgian noldon</i> ‘would not follow’ | Sx/Sx |

Each sentence in the prose narrative was divided into its natural syntactic constituents. All constituents at all levels of syntactic structure (including whole sentences) were inspected to see if they qualified as two-word Sx/Sx. Items 14a–d were the only candidates. Item 14a is not a very good type A1 verse because *ānne* is used here like an unstressed indefinite article rather than with the sense of modern English *one*, a somewhat more prominent usage. Item 14d qualifies as Sx/Sx if *-ian* counts as a single syllable by elision. Items 14b–c are straightforward examples of two-word Sx/Sx. In 5b, the short stressed syllable of *wērode* can be resolved with the following unstressed syllable, and these two short syllables then become the metrical equivalent of one long stressed syllable. No two-word realizations of types A2, D, or E were found in *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*. Almost all of the prose phrases with two stressed words contained one or more unstressed function words as well.¹³

The Battle of Brunanburh is shorter than *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*, with about 370 total words. The poem contains 25 instances of two-word type A1, 2 instances of two-word type A2, 18 instances of the various two-word D types, and 5 instances of two-word type E. One of the type A1 verses is 34b, *lytle weorode* ‘with a small troop.’ Except for the spelling, this is identical to one of the two-word instances in *Cynewulf and Cyneheard* (item 14b). The same phrase appears as verse 2093b of *Genesis A*, one of the earliest Old English poems in traditional meter

¹³ During the Old English period, inflectional endings became less distinct and their functions were gradually taken over by unstressed function words (Russom 2012). There was no reason to avoid such words in prose or in the late alliterative form employed by Ælfric (Russom 1987: 133–44). The late *Brunanburh* is selected for analysis to rule out the possibility that *Beowulf* restricts unstressed function words simply because it is earlier than the surviving prose.

(Fulk 1992: 392). The *little weorode* formula has archaic grammar, with the instrumental inflection of *little* expressing the idea of accompaniment. It is the sort of formula that might find its way into early heroic prose. The first surviving manuscript of *Cynewulf and Cyneheard* was written about forty years before the event recorded in *Brunanburh*. Though linguistically more like *Beowulf*, *Brunanburh* is chronologically later than *Cynewulf and Cyneheard*. Archaic grammar persists in *Brunanburh* because it allows the poet to maintain the word foot as a principle of verse construction.¹⁴

The strength of N2 can also be illustrated by evidence of a more familiar kind involving what does or does not occur. The hypothesis that metrical feet are based on words explains, for example, why the acceptability of a variant with a given stress pattern sometimes depends on placement of word boundaries. Resolved sequences are underlined in examples requiring resolution.

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|---|--------------------|
| (15) (a) <i>wīsfæst</i> / <i>wordum</i> (626a) | Ss/Sx (type A2) |
| ‘wise with words’ | |
| (b) * <i>wīsfæstum</i> / <i>wordum</i> (constructed) | *Ssx/Sx |
| ‘with wise words’ | |
| (c) <i>gumcystum</i> / <i>gōd</i> (2543a) | Ssx/S (type E) |
| ‘noble with manly virtues’ | |
| (d) * <i>gumcystum</i> / <i>gōdum</i> (constructed) | *Ssx/Sx |
| ‘with noble manly virtues’ | |
| (e) <i>geolorand</i> / (tō) <i>gūþe</i> (438a) | Ss/(x)Sx (type A2) |
| ‘yellow-shield to battle’ | |
| (f) <i>gūðrinc</i> / <i>goldwlan</i> c (1881a) | Ss/Ss (type A2) |
| ‘battle-warrior gold-proud’ | |
| (g) * <i>gumdryhten</i> / <i>goldwlan</i> c (constructed) | *Ssx/Ss |
| ‘manly-lord gold-proud’ | |
| (h) <i>gamolfeax</i> / (ond) <i>gūðrōf</i> (608a) | Ss/(x)Ss (type A2) |
| ‘grey-haired and battle-bold’ | |

Items 15a and 15c are ordinary realizations of their verse types. A change in grammatical inflection creates 15b and 15d, verses with a pattern widely regarded as unacceptable in *Beowulf*. The problem is then to explain why variants like 15e are acceptable even though they have stress patterns identical to 15b and 15d. The same problem arises with the remaining examples. Item 15f has an acceptable verse pattern,

¹⁴ The language of *Brunanburh* is nevertheless identifiable as late because it does not employ archaisms known to historical linguists that were no longer recoverable by tenth-century poets (Hartman 2014, and cf. Bredehoft 2014).

15g has an unacceptable pattern, and 15h is acceptable even though it has the same stress pattern as 15g. These distinctions cannot be represented in the scansion systems of Sievers (1893) and Bliss (1967), which assign all adjacent unstressed syllables to one metrical “dip” with no internal structure. The word-foot theory, on the other hand, distinguishes unstressed syllables of stressed words, which must always be included within feet, from unstressed words, which may stand outside the metrical pattern as extrametrical syllables (Russom 1987: 33–8). This makes it possible to scan items 15e and 15h as variants of acceptable patterns with an extrametrical syllable (parenthesized).

The hypothesis that foot patterns are based on word patterns also rules out verse patterns that cannot be realized as a pair of Old English words.

- (16) **þenden he wið / wulf* (3027a) *(x)xxx/S
 ‘when he (plundered) with the wolf’

A verse pattern xxx/S would satisfy the requirement that Old English verses must have at least four metrical syllables (four syllables not reduced to three by obligatory resolution). Variants like item 16 cannot plausibly be ruled out by scansion systems that reject the foot concept (cf. Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 263). Such variants are ruled out by the word-foot theory, however. Because there are no trisyllabic function words in Old English, there is no way to construct a two-word prototype for a verse pattern xxx/S.¹⁵ Manuscript instances of xxx/S are very rare in *Beowulf* and item 16 is widely regarded as suspect. As Fulk, Bjork, and Niles suggest (2008: 331), “not improbably the scribe has miscopied *wulfe*.” With *wulf* emended to *wulfe*, the verse scans as a routine variant of type A3.

As we have observed, the word-foot theory permits addition of extrametrical words before the Ssx foot of type C, as for example in variants like 17a.

- (17) (a) *ne mihte / **snotor** hæleð* (671a) (x)x/Ssx
 ‘then he removed (armor) from himself’
 (b) ***þegn** / nytte behēold* (494b) S/Sxxs
 ‘the servant performed (his) office’
 (c) ****þegn** / nytte ne behēold* (constructed) *S/Sxxxs
 ‘the servant did not perform his office’

In 17a, *ne* ‘not’ can be added to negate the sentence because it can stand outside the boundaries of the light foot. The theory does not

¹⁵ An xxx word pattern did develop in Old Norse and the pattern xxx/S was acceptable in *fornyrðislag*, the Norse meter most closely related to Old English meter (Russom 1998: 33).

permit addition of such words inside the Sxxs foot of a type Db verse like 17b, however. Since there are no relevant boundaries internal to the foot, the theory would require inclusion of *ne* in the basic metrical pattern of 17c and its Sxxxs foot would not have the pattern of an Old English word. The theory accordingly rejects 17c while accepting 17b as a typical variant of the pattern S/Sxxs.

The second foot of item 18a looks at first glance like an instance of the unacceptable pattern Sxxxs.

- (18) (a) *hē þē æt / **sunde** oferflāt* (x)x/Sxxs (with elision)
 (517b) 'he overcame you
 at swimming'
- (b) **hē þē on / **ȝðum** oferflāt* *(x)x/Sxxxs
 (constructed) 'he overcame
 you on the waves'

In this case, however, the foot contains two adjacent unstressed vowels that become equivalent to one unstressed vowel by a rule of elision (Russom 1998: 139–41). With elision, 18a is a routine type B variant. In the constructed item 18b, the word-final [m] of *ȝðum* prevents elision and the second foot no longer has the pattern of an Old English compound.

As we have seen, the meter allows a word group to realize a compound foot, as in 19a–b.

- (19) (a) ***draca** / morðre swealt* (892b) S/Sxs (type Db)
 'the dragon died from the assault'
- (b) *oð þæt hē / **morðre** swealt* (2782b) (x)/Sxs (type B)
 'until he died from the assault'
- (c) ****morðre** / swealt* (constructed) *Sx/S
 'he died from the assault'

If variants like 19c were acceptable, it would become impossibly difficult to verify that 19a and 19b had two feet rather than three, especially in a narrative meter designed for reception in real time at the speed of recitation. The requirement that each verse must have exactly two feet would be meaningless if feet were too difficult to count. Because Sxs word groups were accepted as realizations of an Sxs foot, the verse pattern *Sx/S had to be ruled out. For the same reasons, use of Ss word groups ruled out *S/S, use of Ssx word groups ruled out *S/Sx, and use of Sxxxs word groups ruled out *Sxx/S.¹⁶

¹⁶ The verse pattern Sxx/S could be used in *fornyrðislag* because loss of prefixes from Old Norse had eliminated the foot pattern Sxxx (Russom 1998: 19–20). In *Beowulf*, the verse

Evidence for what does or does not occur sometimes involves a contrast between unmetrical verses and verses with low frequency, as in items 15, 17, and 18. In such cases it might seem reasonable to dismiss the evidence as insignificant. Where unmetrical verses contrast with acceptable variants of higher frequency, as in items 16 and 19, an alternative explanation may seem reasonable. Dismissal and alternative explanation become more difficult when all relevant evidence is explained by a single hypothesis that is clear, simple, and inherently plausible: Old English verses consist of two word-based feet.¹⁷ One scrap of evidence may have limited weight but every scrap supports the same hypothesis and the cumulative weight of this evidence must be acknowledged.

Alternative explanations are further restricted when addition of N1 to N2 explains the distribution of verse types and their various linguistic realizations. As we have observed, N1 and N2 derive from one more general hypothesis: metrical units are based on linguistic units. If this turns out to be a poetic universal, as seems likely (Russom 2011), a theory for alliterative meter need do little more than to specify that it employs metrical positions (based on syllables), metrical feet (based on words), metrical verses (based on small phrases), and metrical lines (based on sentences). Distinctive characteristics of the meter largely reduce to distinctive characteristics of late Proto-Germanic and Old English.

Old English meter cannot be learned by memorizing a few explicit rules. To appreciate the *Beowulf* poet's versecraft, an auditor must internalize the two-word prototypes for acceptable verse patterns and assess departures from prototypes at the speed of performance. A native speaker of Old English could learn verse types by registering the importance of two-word phrases, which had far higher frequency in poetry than in ordinary language. To learn the alliterative line patterns, a native speaker could observe the predominance of clauses ending in the b-verse and the unusual frequency of archaic constructions with weak phrasal stress on the last word. Like linguistic rules, rules of Old English meter were acquired by intuition, without conscious thought. The purely linguistic knowledge required to assess complexity would already have been internalized by the poet's original audience during

patterns *x/S and *xx/S would have looked too much like an S foot with anacrusis; but in Old Norse, loss of prefixes made anacrusis unnecessary and these short patterns could be used (Russom 2009: 73–8).

¹⁷ Poets with no theoretical claims to defend have noticed a significant effect of word patterns in iambic and trochaic meters. "It is significant," Kiparsky says (1977: 224), "that precisely here, far away from all academic metrical theory, we find again and again the spontaneous expressions of an intuition that no metrical theory so far to my knowledge has explicated: that the meter of a line is determined, even against the metrical context, by the predominant metrical structure of the *words* in it."

normal language acquisition. This intuitive knowledge included, for example, the knowledge that the optimal Old English word pattern was Sx (Dresher and Lahiri 1991).

For Old English specialists in the modern academy, learning the meter is a very different task. We cannot learn Old English from native speakers. Our understanding of this dead language is incomplete. We have not internalized rules of the language during childhood and the knowledge required for fine-grained metrical analysis does not come to us unbidden at the moment of performance when we need it. Such knowledge has to be reconstructed painstakingly from texts that happen to survive. Developing automatic facility for appreciation of the meter now requires much conscious effort and we cannot expect to internalize the rules in a completely authentic way. For the original audience, the purely linguistic rules came already integrated. The purely metrical rules, based as they were on linguistic rules, found their places readily within a hybrid system. As we try to recapture what that audience achieved by intuition, we must formulate rules explicitly, fit them together within a coherent system, test the system against the metrical facts, and demonstrate that it was learnable under realistic conditions of reception. This is a more difficult task but it can take us beyond awareness of what is metrical to an understanding of how metrical systems work.

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Alliterating Finite Verbs and the Origin of Rank in Old English Poetry

Mark Griffith

Old English metrical-grammatical theory is corroborated at almost every point by the alliterative practice of the poets. That this should be so is not surprising given that the theory was in considerable measure formulated on the basis of that practice. Accordingly, with but one class of exception, stressed elements and displaced sentence particles of the verse-clause alliterate when found in the alliterating positions of the line (and are presumed to be stressed), and un-displaced sentence particles and proclitics are regularly grouped at the start of the verse-clause before the first stressed element without alliteration (or stress). The single significant mismatch between the alliterative and the metrical-grammatical systems remains the classical problem of Old English metrics: one group of un-displaced sentence particles, the finite verbs, frequently fails to behave according to rule. Some, as expected, do not alliterate, yet the majority do and many of these must be stressed—in contradiction of their metrical-grammatical identity.

The most influential modern approach to this problem is that of Alan Bliss in *The Metre of Beowulf*. Bliss analyses the finite verbs of that poem into nine groups according to their position in the verse-clause.¹ Excluding the first, which contains only displaced finites, the eight groups containing un-displaced finites are as follows (with the number of such verbs alliterating in the poem, the number not alliterating, and the percentage alliterating listed in parenthesis):

2. The verb is in apposition to a verb in Group 1 which immediately precedes it (31, 2; 94%);
3. The verb is the only particle before the first stressed element (64, 19; 77%);
4. The verb is the last particle before the first stressed element (73, 2; 97%);

¹ Bliss 1967, chapter 2. Bliss's footnotes list all the relevant verses. For an overview of literature on the metrical aspects of the problem, see Momma 1996. The metrical-grammatical problems are re-addressed by Kendall 1991.

5. The verb is the last particle but one before the first stressed element (57, 48; 54%);
6. The verb is the last particle but two before the first stressed element (6, 3; 67%);
7. The verb forms a whole clause in itself (11, 2; 85%);
8. The verb is the last particle in a clause which contains no stressed elements (21, 0; 100%);
9. The verb is the last particle but one in a clause which contains no stressed elements (7, 3; 70%).

Bliss concludes that un-displaced finite verbs inhabit a metrical-grammatical hinterland between the stressed elements and the sentence particles, in some syntactic locations behaving as the former (where they precede, or are a replacement for, stressed elements), in others retaining their identity as particles (where they precede other particles): the verb, he says, is “always stressed in groups ... (2), (4) and (8); ... often, but not always, stressed in groups (3) and (7); ... in groups (5) and (9) it is stressed only when the metre absolutely requires it; and ... it is never stressed in group (6) ... alliteration is always to be accepted as evidence that the finite verb is stressed, except when it is followed by one or more particles in the same clause” (1967: 20). In those quite numerous instances in groups 5, 6, and 9 where the verb alliterates but is not, in his view, stressed, the alliteration, he claims, is to be regarded as ‘ornamental’ or ‘non-functional,’ where “a word whose stress is not significant in the metrical pattern may be made to alliterate by the poet as a work of supererogation” (1967: 12). So, for example, for Bliss, the group 3 verb of 1917a *sælde tō sande* alliterates functionally and the verse has two stresses, but the group 5 verb of 1013a *bugon þā tō bence* alliterates ornamentally and the verse is a light verse with only one stress.

Bliss’s argument hence addresses the problem of the un-displaced finites head on and commendably marshals the relevant evidence, but the conclusions do not rest squarely upon that empirical data and, accordingly, some of the resulting scansion appear artificial. Why should it be that *supererogatory* alliteration in groups 6 and 9 occurs at levels not much below the *functional* alliteration of group 3? Can this minor contrast between a rate of 67% and 70% alliteration on the one hand and 77% on the other support a categorical distinction between types of alliteration? Bliss’s method here departs from the wider argument of the book that the presence or absence of alliteration in similar but non-identical metrical patterns, or a contrast of high and low levels of alliteration between them, constitutes the key evidence for their metrical distinctness (see, for example, his sections on the caesura and

anacrusis).² Instead, a speculative claim is made for the existence of a different form of alliteration in order to explain away the inconvenient fact that many verbs alliterate where his view of the syntax predicts that they ought not to do so.

Implicit in Bliss's conclusions here is that the poet's handling of his poetic grammar is representative of the wider Old English poetic tradition, or, at least, his analysis moves seamlessly from *general* statements about Old English metre and metrical-grammar to *specific* ones about *Beowulf* without any explicit discussion of the relationship between the two. And yet his conclusions about the verbs of several groups rest on very small numbers of examples: merely thirty-two verses provide all of the evidence there is for three of his nine categories (Groups 6, 7, and 9). A broader perspective on the issue is needed: below are the figures for the rest of the surviving poetry (including *Beowulf* and hypermetric verse, but excluding various non-traditional late poems and poems irregular in one way or another: *The Metres of Boethius*, the *Metrical Psalms* of the Paris Psalter together with the *Fragments of Psalms*, the *Metrical Charms*, the eleventh-century poems of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in ASPR VI, and *Instructions for Christians*).³ Group 2 has been removed. Uniquely, it is not defined by Bliss in terms of the relationship of the finite to the following stressed element but, rather, to the finite of the preceding clause. Accordingly, such verses are all ambiguous, belonging also to one of the other groups. Verses of this group in *Beowulf* have accordingly been re-allocated in this count to the other groups to which they belong. Three groups have also been added (6b, 10 and 11) which find no examples in *Beowulf*. The same total numbers and percentages are also given.

3. The verb is the only particle before the first stressed element (687, 234; 75%);
4. The verb is the last particle before the first stressed element (693, 120; 85%);
5. The verb is the last particle but one before the first stressed element (411, 304; 57%);
- 6a. The verb is the last particle but two before the first stressed element (78, 45; 63%);
- 6b. The verb is the last particle but three before the first stressed element (5, 1; 83%)

² See Bliss 1967, chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

³ No systematic application of Bliss's analysis to the rest of the corpus has been undertaken, but the metrical-grammar of some poems has been separately investigated. For the un-displaced finites in *Genesis B*, see Lewis 1987: 80-4; for *Guthlac A* and *B*, see Roberts 1971: 97-104.

7. The verb forms a whole clause in itself (92, 38; 71%);
8. The verb is the last particle in a clause which contains no stressed elements (204, 14; 94%);
9. The verb is the last particle but one in a clause which contains no stressed elements (74, 17; 81%)
10. The verb is the last particle but two in a clause which contains no stressed elements (15, 2; 88%)
11. The verb is the last particle but three in a clause which contains no stressed elements (1, 0; 100%)

The big picture does not support Bliss's conclusions from *Beowulf*. The un-displaced finite, he states, "when it is followed by one or more particles ... is associated with them and not normally stressed" (1967: 20), and yet alliteration occurs more frequently on the verb in group 6b,⁴ than it does in 6a, and more so in group 6a⁵ than in group 5: that is, the further the verb is from the first stressed element of the verse-clause, (and the stronger we should therefore expect its identity as a particle to be), the more frequently in the corpus that it alliterates! He continues: "when [the verb] stands between one or more particles and the first stressed element [i.e. in group 4] it is assimilated to the stressed elements and is treated as such" (1967: 20); but this claim is not supported by the evidence of the corpus, for where there are merely two exceptions to this in *Beowulf*, the rest of the corpus provides 118 verses of group 4 where the finite does not alliterate and must be unstressed.⁶

⁴ Verses of group 6b alliterate at *GenB* 318a,, 401a, 679a, *Dream* 122a, *MSol* 103a; one does not alliterate at *ChristC* 1383b.

⁵ Verses of group 6a alliterate 26 times where alliteration is metrically essential at: *GenA* 867a, 965a, 2175a, 2258a, *GenB* 491b, 575b, *And* 307a, 629a, 920a, *ChristA* 342a, *ChristC* 1474a, *Jul* 210a, *Res* 26b, 43b, *Beo* 525a, *MSol* 13a, 253b, 371a, 459a, *JDay II* 80a, *Exhort* 52a, *KtPs* 94a, *Pr* 4a 5a, 68a, 74a; verses of this group alliterate 52 times in verses with a following alliterating word at: *GenA* 873a, 2180a, *GenB* 240a, 259a, 389a, 491a, 579a, 588a, 621a, 647a, 830a, *Sat* 458a, 588a, 698a, *And* 618a, *Soul I* 22a, 33a, *HomFr I* 9a, *Dream* 31a, 32a, 33a, 39a, 46a, 63a, 64a, 67a, 75a, *ChristA* 335a, *ChristC* 1185 a, 1487a, *GuthA* 427a, *Jul* 87a, 212a, *Wid* 110a, *Soul II* 22a, 30a, *Rid* 35.3a, *Res* 57a, *Hell* 33a, *Beo* 590a, 688a, 1711a, 1799a, 2247a, 2623a, *MSol* 332a, 464a, *JDay II* 66a, *KtPs* 31a, *Seasons* 206a, *LRid* 13a. Verses of this group do not alliterate 45 times and occur at: *GenA* 858a, 1037a, 2169b, *GenB* 304a, 322a, 619b, 669a, 708a, *Ex* 572b, *Dan* 309a, 452a, *Sat* 704a, *And* 45a, 118a, 359a, 507a, 633a, 847a, 1063a, 1712a, *Soul I* 151a, *Dream* 30b, 33b, 59b, 60b, 66b, 69b, 117a, *El* 939a, *ChristB* 758a, *ChristC* 1365a, *Az* 54a, *Sea* 20a, *Res* 22a, 29a, *Pha* 4a, *Beo* 388a, 1626a, 1732a, *Finn* 37a, *Wald B* 18a, *Mald* 34a. *MSol* 458b,, *LPr* III 14a, 27a.

⁶ *GenA* 143b, 156b, 2123b, 2274a, 2389b, 2450b, 2478a, 2519a, 2579b, 2602b, 2782a, 2793b, 2914b, *GenB* 238b, 255b, 260b, 280b, 294b, 297b, 303b, 315a, 338a, 388b, 401b, 411b, 416b, 489b, 494a, 520b, 816b, 821a, *Ex* 426a, *Dan* 143a, 158a, 163a, 182a, 338a, *Sat* 36a, 55b, 353a, 401b, *And* 1269b, 1321b, *El* 907b, 1109a, *ChristC* 921b, 1460a, 1629b, *GuthA* 4a, 129b, 510b, 684b, *Az* 186a, *Jul* 242b, 563b, 614b, *Wan* 6a, 92a, 92a, 92b, 93a, 111a, *Gifts* 108a, *Prec* 70a, *Sea* 47a, *Wid* 71a, *Max I* 35b, 44a, 98b 145b, 169a, *Pan* 30b, *Whale* 49b, *Rid* 13.1a, 29.7a, 42.1a, 43.1, 48.1a, 49.1a, 51.1a, 52.1a, 53.1a, 55.1a, 58.1a, 59.1a, *Res* 2b, *Hell* 17a, *Rid* 87.1a, *Jud* 3b, 6b, 68b, 95b, 288b, 299b, 344b, 347b, *Finn* 8b, 22a, *Wald B* 16a, *Mald* 51a, 65a, 79a, 175a,

This is a group more numerous than any group that *Beowulf* alone can provide. Finally, the claim that “when [the verb] forms ... a clause which contains no stressed element it supplies the place of the missing stressed element” (1967: 20), finds support in the fact that there are also but two non-alliterating finites in group 7 in *Beowulf*, but the rest of the corpus supplies another thirty-six examples, and so overall nearly 30% of this type fails to alliterate.⁷

The non-alliterating verses of group 4 offer further insight into the limitations of Bliss’s approach. In some the finite is followed in the b-verse by a compound (with the verb italicised and the alliterating sound in bold):

<i>GenA</i> 2123b	<i>Pā spræc</i> gūð cyning
<i>GenA</i> 2602b	Ne <i>wiste</i> blonden feax
<i>GuthA</i> 129b	swā <i>dōð</i> wræc mæcgas
<i>Wan</i> 92b	Hwær <i>cwōm</i> māþ bumgyfa?
<i>Pan</i> 30b	Hē <i>hafað</i> sundor cynd
<i>Finn</i> 8b	Nū <i>ārīsað</i> wēad æda

The context of the last example is instructive:

gūðwudu hlynneð

scyld scefte oncwyrð. Nū scýneð þes mōna
waðol under wolcnum. Nū *ārīsað* **wēad**æda [6b–8b]

Both line 7b and 8b belong to group 4. In 7b the verb alliterates; in 8b it does not. The salient difference is that in 7b the verb is followed by a single noun where in 8b the verse is closed by a compound. Compounds “in which both elements retain their full semantic value” are required to alliterate and so ought not to appear in the final position of the line.⁸ The failure of *ārīsað* to alliterate is a consequence of the specific type of stressed element that follows it.

In others of this group, the verb is followed in the a-verse by two stressed elements both alliterating:

<i>GenA</i> 2274a	“Ic <i>fleah</i> wēan , wana
<i>Wan</i> 93a	Hwær <i>cwōm</i> symbla gesetu
<i>Rid</i> 13.1a	Ic <i>seah</i> turf tredan

189a, 280a, 294a, 314a, *Brun* 17b, *MSol* 300a, 301a, 385a, *JDay II* 113a, 123a, 164a, 165a, *Glor I* 20a, 22a, *MEp* 4a.

⁷ *GenA* 1279a, 1594b, 2028a, 2057b, 2186a, 2866b, *GenB* 265a, 274b, 276b, 500b, 503b, 531b, 549b, 581b, 708b, *Dan* 425a, 714a, *Sat* 622a, *El* 571a, 667b, *GuthA* 67a, 192a, 206a, 224a, 239b, 468a, 712a, *Jul* 301b, *Vain* 30a, *Hell* 14a, *Rid* 73.6a, *Finn* 44a, *Mald* 87a, *Mald* 128a, *MSol* 454b, *Creed* 38a, *KtPs* 16a.

⁸ See Kendall 1991: 160. Exceptions are rare, but note in group 3: *GenA* 2547b *Grāp* **heah**prea, *GenB* 241b *Stōd* **his** **hand**geweorc. *GuthB* 1279b *swearc* **norð**rodor *Az* 84b *Trymmað* **eorð**welan, 97b *Fremest* **eorð**welan, 127b *Witon* **eald**gēcýnd, *Sea* 62b *gielleð* **anfloga**. *Azarias* is licentious. *Sweorcan* and *gyllan* are poetic.

<i>Rid</i> 29.7a	Ðā <i>cwōm</i> wundorlicu wiht
<i>Rid</i> 87.1a	Ic <i>seah</i> wundorlice wiht
<i>Mald</i> 175a	Nū ic <i>āh</i> , milde metod
<i>MSol</i> 301a	hīo <i>ābiteð</i> īren mid ōme

Plainly, in these verses the verbs have not been “assimilated to the stressed elements and ... treated as such”, for stressed elements in first position ought to alliterate. But if they did so, these verses would display triple alliteration, which does not appear to have been allowed. If there ever was a syntactic criterion for stressing a verb placed immediately before a stressed element, then it has in these examples become subordinate to other alliterative considerations. The *Beowulf*-poet’s avoidance of structures with alliterating finites preceding full compounds and two separate nouns may, therefore, be a particular constraint of that poet’s style, rather than a general truth of Old English metrical-grammar.⁹

Bliss’s syntactic approach, then, provides a system of a kind for stressing some alliterating un-displaced finites, but it does not explain why numbers of his unstressed un-displaced finites alliterate. Of this problem Bliss says only that such alliteration is perhaps “dictated by circumstances that escape our untrained ears but were immediately obvious to the ear of the Anglo-Saxon” (1967: 20). The focus of this paper is this ‘circumstance’ that Bliss does not identify. Re-examination of the non-alliterating verbs in those groups where alliteration is most frequent in *Beowulf* (groups 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8), and which Bliss accordingly regards as stressed elements is illuminating:

Group 2	518a	<i>hæfde</i> māre mægen
	3096a	<i>bæd</i> /pæt gē geworhton
Group 3	264a	<i>gebād</i> wintra worn
	376b	<i>sōhte</i> holdne wine
	452a	<i>Onsend</i> Higelāce
	459a	<i>Geslōh</i> þīn fæder
	539a	<i>Hæfdon</i> swurd nacod
	609b	<i>gehȳrde</i> on Bēowulfe
	612b	<i>Ēode</i> Wealhþēow forð
	640b	<i>ēode</i> goldhroden
	646b	<i>wiste</i> þām āhlācan
	672b	<i>sealde</i> his hyrsted sword
	764b	<i>wiste</i> his fingra geweald
	918b	<i>Ēode</i> scealc monig
	1201b	<i>gecēas</i> ēcne ræd
	1233a	<i>druncon</i> wīn weras
	1814b	<i>ēode</i> weorð Denum
	2604b	<i>geseah</i> his mondryhten

⁹ *Beo* 2717b *seah on enta geweorc* is the only exception; see Stanley 1975: 307–21.

Alliterating Finite Verbs in Old English Poetry

	2737b	<i>hēold mīn tela</i>
	2986a	<i>nam on Ongenðō</i>
	3166a	<i>forlēton eorla gestreōn</i>
Group 4	1600a	<i>Ðā cōm nōn dāges</i>
	1727b	<i>hē āh ealra geweald</i>
Group 7	2252b	<i>Nāh, hwā sweord wege¹⁰</i>

These twenty-five verses contain nineteen different verbs – *āgan*, *gebīdan*, *biddan*, *cēosan*, *cuman*, *drincan*, *forlētan*, *gān*, *habban*, *healdan*, *gehýran*, *myntan*, *nīman*, *sēcan*, *sellan*, *onsendan*, *gesēon*, *geslēan*, *witan*. Of importance is the fact that the great majority of these verbs have survived to the present as everyday English verbs (although legions of Old English verbs have been lost): *own*, *bid*, *choose*, *come*, *drink*, *go*, *have*, *hold*, *hear*, *seek*, *sell*, *send*, *see*, *slay*. Obviously, the *Beowulf*-poet could not know which of his verbs would survive a thousand years and which would disappear, but it is at least clear from this that he selected his non-alliterating un-displaced finite verbs from the common core of his language. The numbers of occurrences of those of the verbs covered by DOE A–G confirm their core status: *āgan* (ca. 900 occ.), *gebīdan* (ca. 150 occ.), *biddan* (ca. 3200 occ.), *cēosan* (ca. 100 occ.), *cuman* (ca. 8600 occ.), *drincan* (ca. 1200 occ.), *forlētan* (ca. 3000 occ.), *gān* (ca. 3700 occ.). The three which have not survived – *forlētan* (although un-prefixed *let* survives), *nīman* (remaining in modern English only as thieves' cant) and *witan* (surviving only as archaic *wot*) – are also common Old English verbs. None is restricted to poetry.

Of course, common verbs also occur amongst the alliterating un-displaced finites, but the following alliterating finites in *Beowulf* (with numbers and restrictedness of occurrence in the corpus in parentheses) show the contrast:

Group 2	421a	<i>ȳðde eotena cyn</i>	[6 occ., four in poetry]
	514a	<i>mæton merestræta</i>	[9 occ., all poetry]
	515a	<i>glidon ofer gārsecg</i>	[29 occ., eleven in poetry] ¹¹
Group 3	1610a	<i>onwīndeð wælrāpas</i>	[3 occ., all in poetry]
	2746a	<i>swefeð sāre wund</i>	[9 occ., all in poetry]
	2930a	<i>ābreot brimwīsan</i>	[17 occ., ten in poetry]
	302a	<i>seomode on sāle</i>	[15 occ., all in poetry]
	402a	<i>Snyredon ætsomne</i>	[3 occ., all in poetry]
	424a	<i>forgrand gramum</i>	[9 occ., six in poetry]
	714a	<i>Wōd under wolcnum</i>	[26 occ., 22 in poetry]

¹⁰ Bliss (1967: 19) also gives 731a *mynte þæt hē gedælde* as an exception in group 7, but handles *myntan* inconsistently. As a quasi-auxiliary, it belongs in his section on the auxiliaries, which is where he discusses its uses in ll. 712a and 762a.

¹¹ DOE sense 1a 'of motion along the surface of, or across the ocean,' of which *Beo* 515a is an example, is attested only in poetry.

	1120a	<i>hlynode</i> for <i>hlāwe</i>	[11 occ., seven in poetry]
	1161a	<i>beorhtode</i> <i>bencswæg</i>	[unique sense: 'sound clearly']
	1713a	<i>brēat</i> <i>bolgenmōd</i>	[3 occ., all in poetry]
	1917a	<i>sælde</i> <i>tō sande</i>	[9 occ., all in poetry]
	2018a	<i>bædde</i> <i>byre geonge</i>	['incite', 2 occ., one in <i>Beowulf</i>]
Group 4	2705a	<i>forwrat</i> <i>Wedera helm</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
	2852a	<i>wlitān</i> on <i>Wīlāf</i>	[25 occ., 24 in poetry]
	3173a	<i>eahtodan</i> <i>eorlscipe</i>	[24 occ., 11 in poetry]
	28a	<i>Hī hyne</i> <i>pā ætbæron</i>	[9 occ., eight in poetry]
	489b	ond <i>onsæl</i> <i>meoto</i>	[4 occ., two in poetry]
	538b	ond <i>pæt geæfndon swā</i>	[11 occ., all in poetry]
	630a	ond <i>pā gyddode</i>	[5 occ. in the poetic sense 'utter']
Group 5	1265b	<i>þanon wōc fela</i>	[14 occ., all in poetry]
	1327b, 2544b	<i>þonne hniton fēþan</i>	[6 occ., four in poetry]
	1826a	<i>Gif ic pæt gefricge</i>	[3 occ., all in <i>Beowulf</i>]
	2036a	on him <i>gladiað</i>	[unique sense 'glisten']
	2177a	<i>Swā bealdode</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
	2934a	<i>oððæt hī oððodon</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
	3002a	<i>syððan hīe gefricgeað</i>	[3 occ., all in <i>Beowulf</i>]
	3159a	ond <i>betimbredon</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
	3178a	<i>Swā begnornedon</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
	723a	<i>onbræd</i> <i>pā bealohydg</i>	[9 occ., four in poetry]
	1539a	<i>brægd</i> <i>pā beadwe heard</i>	[ca. 60 occ., 31 in poetry]
	1543a	<i>oferwearp</i> <i>pā wērigmōd</i>	[7 occ., three in poetry]
	2288a	<i>stonc</i> <i>ðā æfter stāne</i>	[2 occ., both in poetry]
	2367a	<i>Oferswam</i> <i>ðā sioleða bigong</i>	[<i>hapax legomenon</i>]
Group 6	2661a	<i>Wōd</i> <i>pā þurh þone wælrēc</i>	[26 occ., 22 in poetry]
	688a	<i>Hylde</i> <i>hine pā heaþodēor</i>	[11 occ., six in poetry]
Group 7	161a	<i>seomade</i> ond <i>syrede</i>	[15 occ., all in poetry]
Group 8	2668b	ic <i>ðē fullæstu</i>	[4 occ., three in poetry]

Almost all of these forty-one verses contain verbs that are unique, rare, or uncommon in Old English, and almost all are confined, or mainly confined, in occurrence to the poetry, or are disproportionately frequent there.¹² Hardly any of them survive into modern English. Taken together, they form – quite astonishingly so, given their

¹² In assessing such disproportions, it should be remembered that approximately ten times as much Old English prose survives as verse; see Stanley (1971: 385-6).

rareness – almost one in six of the un-displaced alliterating verbs of the poem. By contrast, not a single one of them, nor any verb with such a profile of occurrence, is found amongst the non-alliterating finites of groups 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, or 9). The complete re-examination of every un-displaced finite verb in the poem reveals that there is *only one* which is of limited occurrence in the language and which is probably poetic and which yet does not alliterate in its verse:

Group 5 1397a *Ahlēop* ðā se gomela [10 occ., four in poetry]

When un-displaced elsewhere in the corpus, finite forms of *ahleapan* alliterate:

Group 3 And 1202a *Āhlēopon* hildfrome

Group 5 Ex 252a *Ahleap* þā for hæleðum

Verse 1397a displays a unique breach of verbal decorum by the *Beowulf*-poet that is, at least arguably, a conscious departure from his normal alliterative practice. At this juncture, Grendel's mother has avenged the death of her son and has carried off Æschere, Hroðgar's closest confidant, to her lair and his death. The aged king, who has reigned for half-a-hundred years, speaks to the hero of his renewed burden of sorrow: *sorh is gentwod Denigea leodum*. Beowulf enjoins him not to grieve, but to rise up swiftly and to accompany him in pursuit of Grendel's mother. The old man, galvanized or rejuvenated by the hero's re-affirmed commitment to the Danish people, does as exhorted, immediately leaps up and thanks God for his speech. The suppression of the expected alliteration on the poetic verb brings the new sense of youth (*ahlēop*) and the fact of age (*se gomela*) into contrastive juxtaposition. A surprising dissonance sharpens the verse's mildly oxymoronic character and, invigorated by the hero's words, Hrothgar momentarily resembles the *senex fortis*.¹³ Some may feel this to be over-interpretation of the postponed alliteration, although there is some evidence elsewhere in the corpus for rhetorically-motivated single alliteration in the a-verse where double might have been expected (see Griffith 2005). The uniqueness in *Beowulf* of this non-alliterating poetic finite, however, remains.

Appendix 1 lists the un-displaced poetic or arguably poetic finites which alliterate in the corpus outside of *Beowulf*.¹⁴ Although *Beowulf* proves to be particularly rich in such lexis, nonetheless, 108 different poetic verbs alliterate 180 times. The great majority of these verbs

¹³ On the *senex fortis* in *Beowulf*, see Burrow 1988: 130–4.

¹⁴ Taking 'poetic' to cover verbs which are both certainly and arguably poetic and also *hapax legomena*. The same late and/or loose poems excluded earlier are also excluded here.

have disappeared from the language. Furthermore, there are very few examples elsewhere in the corpus of un-displaced poetic finites that do not participate in the formal alliteration of the lines in which they appear. I can find only eight. Close analysis of these eight in fact shows some not to be exceptional. In late poetry, functional alliteration of *s-* with *st-* is not unparalleled,¹⁵ and so *MSol* 415a *seomiað* may alliterate:¹⁶

MSol 415 *seomiað* stēap and gēap, stīgeð on lenge

Of the remaining seven, two show strong evidence of ornamental alliteration (with the verb italicized):

Ruin 25 *Crungon* walo wīde, cwōman wōldagas
Mald 189 hē *gehlēop* þone eoh þe āhte his hlāford

Formally, these lines alliterate on *w-* and on vowels respectively, but few listeners would deny the auditory force of the additional non-functional verbal alliteration on *c-* and the cluster *hl-*,¹⁷ giving crossed alliteration in *Ruin* 25 and transverse alliteration in *Maldon* 189. Transverse alliteration is very rare in the poetry, and presumably, therefore, the more remarkable.¹⁸ The reason for these two poets' use of supererogatory alliteration at these points seems now clear: it marks their acknowledgement of the register of *cringan*, and *ge-hlēapan*.¹⁹

Ornamental alliteration also plays a role in *GenA* 2934a. *Genesis A* closes with Abraham's sacrifice to God of the lamb:

Åbrægd þā mid þy bille, brynegield onhrēad,
reccendne wēg rommes blōde,
onblēot þæt lāc gode, sægde lēana þanc... ll. 2932–4²⁰

The *hapax legomenon* *onblōtan*, 'to sacrifice,' does not alliterate with *lāc* and *lēana*, but there is ornamental alliteration with *blōde*, the immediately preceding word of the previous line; the cluster alliteration (on *bl-*) and the undoubted etymological word-play both considerably

¹⁵ At *Sat* 638, *Capt* 7, *Jud* 5, *Mald* 271.

¹⁶ See further on this line below.

¹⁷ On the question of whether *hl-* for the *Maldon* poet had simplified to *l-*, note Pope (1967: 129) on Ælfric's contemporaneous alliterative practice: 'the gradually weakening aspiration of *h* before certain consonants ... has gone far enough to involve most if not all words beginning with *hr* or *hl*'. *Mald* 251 *hlāfordlēas: hām* and 318 *healfe: hlāforde* display, however, normal alliteration on the aspirate.

¹⁸ Elsewhere only at: *GenA* 1858, 2790, *Sat* 462, 503, *Az* 39, *Phoen* 31, *Rid* 39.27, *Res* 19, *Beo* 2615, *PPs* 61.6.2, 77.40.3, 108.29.3, 136.4.1, *Seasons* 89, 100, *MCharm* 2.58.

¹⁹ DOE cites *cringan* as only poetic, with ten occurrences; *ge-hlēapan* occurs also at *ChristB* 717a, once in a gloss to *currere* in Sedulius's *Carmen paschale*, and once in prose (Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*, DOE ref.: B 20.20.1 0628 (2.1.461), where the context concerns the adornment of metrical compositions). On OE glossators' respect for the register of the texts glossed, see Griffith 2014.

²⁰ The text is taken from Doane 2013: 283.

strengthen the possibility, as does the fact that both continue the alliteration of line 2932. The sound play binds together the central ideas of this conclusion, the sword, the sacrifice, and the blood – the picture being symbolic perhaps of the Passion.

Dream 59b is a less convincing candidate for rhetorical alliteration:

Sāre ic wæs mid sorgum gedrēfed, ... *hnāg* ic hwæðre þām secgum tō handa

Both the conjunction *hwæðre* and the line-final noun *handa* pick up on the initial sound of the poetic verb, but listeners may not have been attuned to (even) dense ornamental alliteration confined to the b-verse of the line, and the play, if that is what it is, serves less obvious literary purpose.²¹

The other three instances are not susceptible to alliterative explanation:

<i>Gen B</i> 235	<i>“ac nīotað inc þæs ððres ealles, forlætað þone ænne bēam</i>
<i>Ex</i> 168	<i>Hrēopon mearcweardas middum nihtum</i>
<i>Rim</i> 45	<i>se ær in dæge wæs dýre. Scriþeð nū dēop in fēore</i> ²²

GenB 235a *nīotað* appears to be reflexive, but elsewhere in Old English the verb does not take a reflexive. It has been plausibly suggested that the OS original had *giniudot ink* from *giniudon* ‘enjoy’ which does take the reflexive, but whose OE cognate *genēadian* had a different sense, so persuading the anglicizer to select a near homophone with the right sense (see Capek 1971 and Doane 1991: 255–6). *Rim* 45b *scriþeð* occurs in a difficult passage, which Cross regards as indicating that ‘the poet’s reach exceeded his grasp’.²³ Of these eight, then, three alliterate non-functionally (*Ruin* 25a, *Mald* 189a, *GenA* 2934a), one may take part in its line’s functional alliteration (*MSol* 415a), and one is probably to be discounted (*GenB* 235a), leaving three (*Dream* 59a, *Ex* 168a, *Rim* 45b) as exceptional.

This near total absence of poetic verbs from the un-displaced non-alliterating finites of the Old English poetic corpus, coupled with the proliferation of them amongst the un-displaced alliterating finites leads to the inescapable conclusion that *register* provides the key to the alliterative behaviour of these finites. For the Old English poets, *un-displaced, poetic finite verbs ought to alliterate*. This configuration by register rather than by syntax may look more familiar to critics of Middle English

²¹ Swanton (1970: 121) believes that *hwæðre* is not original. On verbal play in the hypermetric lines of this poem, see Nicholson 1963.

²² *Hrōpan*, *neotan*, *scriþan* and *seomian* are listed as poetic in Griffith (1991: 183–5). *Hnīgan* has ten occurrences in verse and four in prose.

²³ Cross 1962: 15, and see, also, Macrae-Gibson 1987: 48–50.

alliterative poetry than to those of Old English. In studies of the later alliterative poetics, contrasts of high and low rates of alliteration are not, as they are for Bliss, indicative of metrical truths, but rather of stylistic ones. August Brink's foundational study *Stab und Wort im Gawain* showed that poetic nouns and adjectives in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* – words which are largely not found outside the alliterative tradition and which have not survived into Modern English – alliterate very much more frequently than non-poetic ones which occur elsewhere in Middle English and many of which have survived. The first group are termed words of high rank, the second words of low rank.²⁴ I have argued recently that rank as it applies to nouns and adjectives exists in Old English poetry only in a shadowy form because of the dominance of the metrical-grammatical rules which compel stressed elements to alliterate in alliterative positions of the line *irrespective of register* (see Griffith 2013: 1–14). These regulations eroded at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period allowing register to emerge in a new poetics as the much more powerful organizing force that it became in Middle English alliterative lexis. The evidence presented here demonstrates that the historical origin of rank in Old English poetry is not to be sought amongst its poetic nouns and adjectives: *poetic register first became a ranking force in Old English poetry amongst the un-displaced finite verbs for nowhere else in the system did the metrical-grammatical rules allow rank to be visible.*²⁵

In turn, this suggests that explanations for the alliteration of the un-displaced finites in Old English poetry as a group,²⁶ whether poetic or not, will not be found in the field of syntax, but rather in that of style.²⁷ Certainly, the poets frequently deploy such verbs in *clusters* where, in short space, repeated breaches of the metrical-grammatical norm contrast with the broader context of alliteration on stressed elements. These could hardly fail to impress an alert and experienced listener. A few examples are illustrative of the point. The opening of *The Battle of Finnsburh* is worth re-visiting:

'Ac onwacnigeað nū, wīgend mīne;
habbað ēowre linda; hīcgeaþ on ellen;
windað on orde; wesað onmōde'
Ðā ārās mænig goldhladen ðegn, gyrde hine his swurde.²⁸

²⁴ Brink 1920. Brink's ideas were explored further by Borroff (1962: 52–90).

²⁵ Cronan (1986: 147), from a study of some 150 nouns in OE poetry, found that the poetic ones alliterated 81.5% of the time. Un-displaced poetic finites alliterate 98.4% of the time.

²⁶ I leave on one side the question of whether un-displaced alliterating finites are stressed in positions where the metre does not demand it. If their alliteration does not indicate stress, there is no other empirical data to demonstrate it. If their alliteration denotes stress, there are breaches of Kuhn's First Law.

²⁷ Accordingly, I agree with Sievers (1893: 44–5) who suggested that alliteration of finite verbs before nouns in the b-verse is emphatic in nature.

²⁸ The text is from Fry (1974: 32).

An unexpected night-time attack on the hall occupied by the speaker (?Hnæf) and his men has begun. The young king attempts to rouse his men and steel them for the conflict. Astonishingly, these four lines contain six un-displaced and alliterating finites (italicized) and these include even verbs of low-stress, *habban* and *wesan*. Together they form the most distinctive stylistic feature of the speech. The speaker's oral force, his alliterative prioritizing of his imperatives, is a response to the urgency of the situation and is appropriate to the genre of exhortation to battle.²⁹ And the poet repeats the structure for one final time; as the king has said, so, as if as one, his followers do: many a thane *gyrde hine his swurde*.

The second dialogue of *Solomon and Saturn* contains another cluster of such finites showing play of grammar and meaning:

Gif hit unwitan ænige hwīle
healdað būtan hæftum, hit ðurh hrōf wædeð,
bryceð and *bærneð* boldgetimbru,
seomað stēap and gēap, *stigeð* on lenge,
clymmeð on gecyndo; *cunnað* hwænne mōte
fyr on his frumsceaft, on fæder geardas ... ll. 402–7³⁰

These six lines show five un-displaced, non-poetic alliterating finites, together with the poetic *seomað* discussed above. This poetic finite can now be seen to participate in a more general attempt by the poet to use verbal alliteration mimetically to convey the rapid and destructive action of a house-fire: after the escape of the unguarded flame through the roof (403b *ðurh hrōf wædeð*), short clauses predominate with their verbs alliterating. Because the clauses are so short and their subject shared (but unstated), inflectional rhyme in the verbs inevitably occurs (with rhyme too in 405a *stēap* and *gēap*), so making the pattern even more prominent.

Because the imitation of fast or violent action is the commonest stylistic use of such clusters, they are commonest in *The Riddles*, which frequently characterize their solutions by briefly depicting their typical actions or the actions typically done to them.³¹ The *Riddle* 65 'Onion' shows a good grouping:

²⁹ Campbell (1962: 16–17) views the licence of alliterating finites before nouns in *Finnsburh* as evidence of lay (as opposed to epic) form. The link with genre is interesting, but the speech does not, particularly in its rhetorical list of hypothetical alternative scenarios, exhibit the compression expected of lay.

³⁰ The text is from Menner (1941: 99).

³¹ Other groups in *Riddles* are: *Rid* 21.5–6, 24.2–4a, 25.8–9, 26.2b–4a, 38.6–7, 51.4b–5, 54.2–8. Lines in *The Riddles* in which both verses have un-displaced alliterating finites occur at 20.34, 21.5, 21.6, 24.2, 24.3, 25.8, 25.9, 26.13, 30a.7, 30b.7, 38.7, 50.6, 51.5. Other notable clusters in the corpus are at: *Dan* 325–7 (=Az 42–4), *HomFr* I 30–6, *GuthA* 808–13, *MSol* 266–72, 294–301, 302–8, 315–21. Sequences of finites of the same syntactic group occur at: *Dream* 31–75 (group 6); 115–47 (group 8); *El* 121a–7a (group 3); *ChristC* 930–52 (group 3);

Cwico wæs ic, ne *cwæð* ic wiht, *cwele* ic efne sēþēah,
 Ær ic wæs, eft ic *cwōm*. Æghwā mec rēafað,
hafað mec on headre, ond mīn hēafod scireþ,
bīteð mec on bær līc, *briceð* mīne wīsan.
 Monnan ic ne bīte, nympe hē mē bīte;
 sindan þāra monige þe mec bītað.³²

The poem has fourteen clauses in six lines, with six in the first two – and so its style is as far removed from the more normal, leisurely, appositive style, focused on stressed elements and the varying of them, as it is possible for Old English poetry to achieve. Part of this denseness again results from omission of the subject – *æghwa*, ‘everyone’ – which is understood in ll. 3a, 4a, 4b. Un-displaced finites rise into alliterative prominence in five of these clauses, perhaps partly as a consequence of the lack of explicit subjects, but also by the poet’s choice, for inversion of the order in some of these clauses would have normalized their metrical-grammar (*on headre *hafað*, *on bær līc *bīteð*). Inflectional rhyme again becomes discernible, together with other devices commonly found in passages with such clustering finites. Ornamental alliteration appears: the opening line alliterates functionally on *c*-, but ornamentally on the cluster *cw*- (*cwico*, *cwæð*, *cwele*, possibly continuing on to line 2a *cwōm*). The subordinate assonance or alliteration of the first person unstressed pronouns in lines 3 and 4, (*mec*, *mīn*, *mec*, *mīne*) becomes the alliteration of lines 5 and 6 (*Monnan*, *mē*, *monige*, *mec*), whilst, conversely, the functional alliteration of line 4 (*bīteð*, *briceð*) becomes ornamental in lines 5 and 6 (*bīte*, *bīte*, *bītað*, with word echo, rhyme, and *adnominatio*), an aural reversal thereby underscoring the chiasitic structure. The un-displaced non-poetic alliterating finites, accordingly, play their part in a broader stylistic strategy which conjures up the exceptionally violent world of this vegetable.

Clusters of un-displaced *poetic* finites serve very similar purposes to the non-poetic ones, but something extra is added to the mix. *The Panther* shows a brief and appositional clustering of poetic finites:

þæt is se ealda fēond,
 þone hē *gesælde* in sūsla grund,
 ond *gefetrade* fyrnum tēagum,
*bīþeah*hte þrēanydum, ond þy þriddan dæge
 of dīgle ārās ... ll. 58b–62a³³

Phoen 320–31 (group 4); *Jul* 5–17 (group 3), *Beo* 421–4 (group 3), 448–50 (group 3), 1531–45 (group 5), *Mald* 130–6 (group 5), *MRune* 25b–6b (group 5), *KtHy* 7a–9a (group 4).

³² For the text, see Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 230.

³³ The text is from Squires (1988: 39–40). DOE gives *be-þeccan* as ‘disproportionately freq. in poetry’; *ge-feterian* and *ge-sælan* are both listed in Griffith (1991: 183–5).

Christ's harrowing of Hell and his binding of Satan are well-expressed: on the one hand, the three finites of three consecutive a-verses communicate effectively the dramatic violence of the act; on the other, their poetic register befits the majesty and heroism of the actor.

Finally, *Riddle 34* 'Rake' contains two poetic verbs of interest. The poem has not attracted much critical attention. Tupper thinks it 'dull' (1910: 149):

Ic wiht geseah in wera burgum,
 sēo þæt feoh fēdeð; hafað fela tōþa.
 Nebb biþ hyre æt nytte, niþerweard gongeð
 hiþeð holdlice and tō hām tyhð,
 wæpeð geond weallas, wyrte sēceð.
 Āā hēo þā findeð, þā þe fæst ne biþ;
 læteð hīo þā wlitigan wirtum fæste
 stille stondan on staþolwonge,
 beorhte blīcan blōwan ond grōwan.³⁴

The characterization of the garden implement moves from the 'creature' (ll. 1–2) to its key part, its 'beak,' *nebb* (ll. 3–5), before returning to the 'creature' (ll. 6–9). The insistent feminine pronouns at the start and the end (2a *sēo*, 3b *hyre*, 6a *hēo*, 7a *hīo*) do more than merely reflect the grammatical gender of *wiht*, they serve to feminize the 'creature' that feeds the cows and leaves the pretty flowers to bloom, this being, we may speculate, metonymic transfer from the woman who typically fed the animals and tended the garden. On the other hand, the actions of her *nebb*, getting down to raking, ravaging before returning home, hunting by the walls, and searching, appear strongly masculine. The 'beak' is imaged as the male servant of the *wiht* doing her service (3a *hyre æt nytte*) loyally (4a *holdlice*). The rapid sequence of single verse-clauses (in 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b) indicates the vigorous activity involved in this service. The absence of pronoun subjects compresses the verses, and tends to confirm the literary use of the gendering: as *nebb* is neuter, the use of *hit* would have impeded the implied masculinization. Both the finites of the verses with *nebb* as subject which are un-displaced and alliterating are poetic in register: *hiþeð* and *wæpeð*.³⁵ The actions of plundering and hunting are, respectively, warlike and aristocratic; the register of the verbs denoting these actions heightens them further, lending them heroic quality. The solution of the riddle is mundane, but

³⁴ The text is that of Krapp and Dobbie (1936: 197), with changed punctuation.

³⁵ *Hyðan* occurs eight times in verse; elsewhere at *ChristC* 973a, 1043b, *Rid* 33.a7 (or read *heardhiþende* as one word), 93.28a, 95.5a, *MSol* 293a, 455a; twice in glosses to Aldhelm's *Carmen de Virginitate* 2476 *grassantibus: hiðendum*; twice in prose, in the O.E. Bede in the alliterative formula *hýðe ond hergode* (DOE ref.: B9.6.5 0333 (14.200.28)) and once in Gregory's *Dialogues* (DOE ref.: B9.5.5 0876 (38.258.10)). *Wæþan* occurs elsewhere at *Ex* 481a, *El* 1273a, *Met* 19.15a; and once in prose (DOE ref.: LS 10 (Guth) B 3.3.10 0028 (5.88)).

the sly mismatch of subject and lexis in these middle lines is far from dull. This is a poem whose style plays with the mock heroic.

We may conclude, then, that a metrical-grammar in which only stressed elements and displaced sentence particles could alliterate would have produced poetry of greater rigidity, with reduced stylistic range. That un-displaced poetic finites almost always alliterate in Old English poetry, and as a group do so more than poetic nouns as a group (even though free of the rules governing those), proves that Old English alliterative poetry was not completely dominated by the nominal and that its alliterations were not governed *solely* by metre. Although rank later became the principal regulatory force of the poetic lexis of Middle English alliterative poetry, the evidence presented here strongly suggests that in its beginning it was an outgrowth of an important licence within the system which allowed the poets to exploit much more fully the potential of their verbs.

Appendix 1.

Poetic un-displaced alliterating finite verbs in Old English poetry outside of *Beowulf*

†= poetic or mainly occurring in poetry

*= arguably poetic in register

‡ *hapax legomenon*

ā-bannan *‘summon’ *Dan* 427a; **ā-bēodan* *Hell* 56a; **ā-ferian* *GenA* 2479a, *And* 1177a; **ā-hlēapan* *Ex* 252a, *And* 1202a; †*ā-hlyhhan* *Jul* 189a; †*ā-hwætān* *GenB* 406a; **ā-weaxan* *ChristC* 1252a, *Rid* 9.10a; **bāsnian* *And* 1065a; †*be-breccan* *MSol* 296b; †*be-būgan* *Men* 230a; †*be-fæðman* *Sat* 358a; †*be-frēogan* *KtPs* 110a; †*be-fyllan* *GenA* 1010a; †*be-murnan* *ChristA* 176b, *GuthA* 130a; **be-strūdan* *GenA* 2079a; **be-þeccan* *ChristC* 1422a, *Pan* 61a; †*be-wrecan* *Dan* 304a, *Az* 25a; **ge-blandan* *And* 33a, *ChristC* 1437a; †*blican* *GenB* 811a, *Ex* 159a; †*boncian* *Rid* 87.6b; †*bregdan* *Ex* 222a, *GuthB* 910b, *Rid* 2.13a, *JDay* I 71a, *MSol* 99b; †*breodan* *Vain* 28a; †*breodwian* *GuthA* 287b; †*brēotan* *Jul* 16a; †*byldan* *And* 1186a, *El* 1038a, *Mald* 209a; †*byrlian* *GuthB* 870a, *Jul* 486b; †*clengan* *Rid* 28.8b; †*ge-cræftan* *Jul* 290a; †*ge-dīgan* *Rid* 38.6a; **dōmian* *Dan* 371b; **drēogan* *GenA* 888a, 1936b, *Soul* I 17a, *Az* 3a, *Jul* 247a, *Soul* II 17a, *Rid* 51.5b, *Wife* 50b, *MSol* 395a; *JDay* II 176b; †*drēosan* *Ex* 47a, *And* 995a, *ChristB* 609a; **dynian* *ChristC* 930a, *JDay* I 59b, *Jud* 204b; †*efnan* *Dan* 183a, *ChristC* 1356a; †*ge-efnan* *El* 1014b; †*eahtian* *‘discuss’ *Dan* 409a; †*ge-feterian* *GenA* 2903a, *Pan* 60a, *MSol* 158a; **firenian* *Soul* I 103a, *Soul* II 97a, *Rid* 20.34b; **flōcan* *Rid* 20.34a, †*for-cinnan* *MSol* 107a; **for-cuman* *And* 1325a; †*for-lācan* *GenB* 647a,

And 614a; ‡for-swelan Phoen 532a; frēogan †love ChristC 1647a, Max I 102a; †fricgan ChristA 92a, Max I 1a, Rid 14.19b, 16.10b, 26.26b, MSol 371a; fyllan *kill GenA 1096a, ChristB 486a; †fysan Hell 33a, Mald 269a; †geocian Dan 291a, Res 46a, 60b; *glistnian MRune 30a; †gomelian Max I 11a; grafan *dig ChristC 1003a; †gyllan Sea 62b, Rid 24.3b, Finn 6a, MSol 268a; *hirdan And 1213a; *ge-hlēapan ChristB 717a; hlemman ChristC 932a; †hlinsian Rid 33.3a; *hnīgan GenB 237a, Rid 3.63b; †hnossian Rid 5.7a; †hrēðan Ex 574a; †hrindan Rid 54.4b; †hrōpan Ex 162a, And 1156b, El 54b, 550b, GuthB 906a; †ge-hȳdian Whale 13a; †ge-hyrstan Fort 74b; †hyþan ChristC 1043b, Rid 34.4a; †lācan GenB 448a, Jul 674a, Rid 56.8a; †ge-lēogan Res 57a; †lēofian GuthA 139a; †lepan Fort 89a; †lignan Dan 763a, ChristC 1119a; †lissan MSol 295b; †nēpan Jul 302a, Rid 25.5b; †nīpan Wan 104a, Sea 31a; †ge-nīpan Wan 96a; †rēotan Fort 46b; †sælan El 228a; †ge-sælan Pan 59a; †scthytan GuthA 127a; †seomian Jul 709a; †sēpan Dan 445a, And 742a, El 530a; †setlan Whale 15a; †snyþian Rid 21.6b; †spearcian Sat 78a; †stæþpan Rid 3.74a; †ge-starian ChristA 307a; †stemnettan Mald 122a; †styrman Jud 223b; †styrnan GenA 2497b; †swefan (sleep) GenA 1564a, Ex 36a; *sweorcan GuthB 1279b; *sweþrian GuthA 113a; †swīfan Rid 12.13a; †twinsian Phoen 124a, 618a, Rid 7.7b; †teofonian OrW 43a, 83a; †tō-gengan GenB 841a; †tō-sælan Rid 16.5a; †tō-swāpan Dan 341a, Az 59a; †tȳtan JDay I 45a; †ge-þancmetian GenA 1917a; *þreodian: Fates 18a, El 549a; †þrintan Vain 24b; †þurh-ræsan Rid 3.36a; †wadan Ex 311a, Dan 615a, And 677a, Rid 62.3a, Mald 96a, 130a; †wæþan El 1273a, Rid 34.5a; †wancian Rid 87.7a; †wīcan Ex 484a; †wīþ-hycgan GuthA 631a; †wlitan El 385b; †yþan Wan 85a.

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Prosody-Meter Correspondences in Late Old English and *Poema Morale*¹

Donka Minkova

1. The reality of resolution in OE verse and its linguistic grounding

A clear understanding of syllabification is central to the account of most phonological processes; it is also an obligatory first step in the description of verse structure in English at any period of its history. As a basic unit of both prosody and meter, the syllable is an analytical tool which allows us to define the structure of verse and test the correspondences between the prosody of speech and ‘metered’ language.² One of the general properties of the components of the syllable is that they are asymmetrical: in articulatory and perceptual terms onsets are more salient than codas; there are no languages in which the syllables must have codas, hence the principle of onset-maximal syllabification. Onset-maximal syllabification entails that a single intervocalic consonant will be associated with the onset of the second syllable, thus a VCV string will be syllabified V-CV, rather than *VC-V.³ Intervocalic clusters present a more complex problem: most commonly the first consonant forms the coda of the syllable to the left and the second consonant becomes the onset of the syllable to the right, but possible word-initial clusters such as *sp-*, *st-*, *bl-*, *tr-* etc. allow ambiguity, thus *castel* ‘castle’ could be *ca-stel*, or *cas-tel*, *deofla* ‘devil, gen. pl.’ could be *deo-fla* or *deof-la*.⁴

¹ Rob Fulk has kept English historical philology and metrics vibrant and relevant, setting the bar high and inspiring a whole generation of scholars. My thoughts on some tricky metrical and phonological problems are submitted to this Festschrift with deep respect and admiration for his exemplary attention to philological detail and his original interpretation of previously obscure and misunderstood linguistic nuances in verse.

² Terminology: I use *prosody/prosodic* with reference to suprasegmental units and the properties of these units in speech; *meter/metrical* refers to the units and properties of verse.

³ Notation: Syllables are separated by dashes. C stands for any consonant, V stands for a short vowel or “short” diphthong, and VV stands for a long vowel or a true/long diphthong. Parentheses include optional elements which do not affect syllable weight. Greek sigma σ represents a syllable.

⁴ For Modern English see Chiosáin et al. 2012, Eddington et al. 2013, Elzinga and Eddington 2014, Olejarczuk and Kapatsinski 2014.

The way one cuts up a string of sounds into syllables determines their weight: in English -(C)VV(C)(C)- and -(C)VC(C)- are heavy (H) and -(C)V- syllables are light (L). Thus the first syllables of Old English (OE) *cēo-san* 'to choose,' *ēh-tan* 'to pursue,' *cnyht-tan* 'to tie up,' are heavy syllables, but the first syllables of *ca-mel* 'camel,' *ca-non* 'canon,' *fi-nol* 'fennel' are light. This reveals another asymmetry between onsets and codas: the presence or the composition of onsets does not affect syllable weight, thus all coda-less syllables in e.g. *e-fe-te* 'newt' are light, while even a single consonant in the coda, as in *en-gel* makes the syllable heavy.

These preliminary remarks are needed because in many verse traditions, including Old Germanic and Old English, syllable weight is a property which affects the metrical behavior of a syllable. One inviolable correspondence between meter and syllable weight in Old English verse is that a heavy syllable bearing primary stress must be the sole occupant of a metrical lift/ictus. If a stressed syllable is light, however, the ictic position may accommodate a following unstressed syllable, in which case the lift is doubly occupied by a 'resolved' sequence of a light syllable followed by an unstressed syllable. Resolution is most clearly linked to the widely accepted four-position principle (Sievers 1885, Bliss 1967, Cable 1974, Fulk 1992), according to which two lifts and two dips are the norm for non-hypermetric verses in the OE alliterative corpus. The examples below illustrate the need for applying resolution:

(1) The metrical equivalence of H and L+σ

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|------------------|
| (a) | w | w | S ^ˆ -w | S | w | |
| | Wæs | se | gry-re | læs-sa | | <i>Beo</i> 1282b |
| | 'was | the | horror | less' | | |
| | | | | | | |
| (b) | w | S ^ˆ -w | S | w | | |
| | on | we-res | wæst-mum | | | <i>Beo</i> 1352a |
| | 'in | man's | form' | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| (c) | w | S | w | S ^ˆ -w | | |
| | mīn | yl-dra | fæ | der | | <i>El</i> 436b |
| | 'my | grand | father' | | | |

In these verses the words *gry-re*, *we-res*, *fæ-der*, scanned with a tie-line connecting the S(trong) and the w(eak) syllable, are metrically equivalent to the heavy syllables *læs-*, *wæst-*, *yl-*. This guarantees that the number of positions in each verse does not exceed four. Commenting on the importance of resolution for the account of OE meter, Fulk (2002: 340) cites the statement that resolution is "a policing action that functions only to regulate the number of positions per verse (Obst

1987a: 464)". The metrical function of resolution, though not all of its details, is now part of the canon of OE metrics.⁵

Fulk (2002) prefaces his original and thought-provoking proposal about the continuity of resolution in Middle English with a tightly argued and very convincing rebuttal to the detractors of OE resolution, providing yet another model of the force of probabilistic reasoning.⁶ The question that is still open, however, is whether resolution is a 'natural' fit with the phonology of Old English, i.e., whether it mirrors an intuitive understanding of the equivalence of a single H syllable to a $L+\sigma$. This is a point that bears elaboration.

The most economical hypothesis, following the principle of maximal fit between the selected metrical form in a particular language and its available structures, is that the metrical equivalence $H = L+\sigma$ in OE is grounded in the ambient phonology. This is appealing, and it is possible that the metrical practice of resolved strong lifts was transparent and learnable in the earliest stages of Old English (see Minkova and Stockwell 1994). One phonologically-based argument for the linguistic grounding of resolution is the apparent lack of monosyllabic words ending in a short vowel either through loss of a syllable coda (PrG **hwaz* > OE *hwā* 'who,' PrG **wiz*, OE *wē* 'we'), or through vowel lengthening (Goth. *nu*, OE *nū* 'now,' Goth. *swa*, OE *swā* 'so') in all North-West Germanic languages. The elimination of lexical monosyllables ending in a short vowel makes English subject to the constraint on *word-minimality*, whereby a minimal lexical word should be prosodically heavy. Fulk (2002: 340–1) references the "minimal word" constraint and uses it to support the interdependence between the phonology and the meter of OE, summarizing his position as follows: "resolution need not be regarded as simply a metrical principle but as a consequence of an early Germanic phonotactic constraint." Acknowledging the need for resolution as a verse convention Minkova and Stockwell (1994) and Minkova (2012) discuss the problematic nature of extending this metrical convention to the synchronic phonology and morphology of late Old English. The alternative interpretation suggested is that by the time the poetic compositions were recorded or copied, the $H = L+\sigma$ equivalence in the meter had become a learned convention whose linguistic foundation was at best opaque.⁷ More specifically, the minimal

⁵ On the attempts to eliminate resolution from the account of OE meter see Fulk 2002: 332. In spite of some remaining disagreements, the canonical metrical status of this device has been confirmed repeatedly; even introductory texts, such as Terasawa (2011: 55), treat resolution as a necessary accommodation which "can adjust the number of syllables to fit the half-lines into acceptable rhythmic patterns".

⁶ I say "yet another" with Fulk (1992: §§1–75) in mind.

⁷ Hanson and Kiparsky (1996: 294–5) cite a similar disjunction between the available linguistic material and meter: "For historical, cultural, or other reasons languages may have meters that fall short of naturally accommodating all their words. For example, a thriving meter in classical Greek and Latin, and in modern Hungarian ..., is the quantitative hex-

word constraint was violable in some of the pronominal monosyllables in OE. The vowel quantity of *he* ‘he,’ *me* ‘me,’ *þu* ‘thou’ fluctuated depending on the position of the pronoun in the phrase or clause: the long vowel would be realized in isolation, in citation forms, after prepositions, but when the pronoun was a clitic, and/or unstressed, the vowel was short (see Hogg and Fulk 2011: 198). Note also the coexistence of heavy and light forms of the same item, e.g. *be* ~ *bī(g)* ‘near, by.’ The other, morphologically-based $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence, the motivation for historical apocope of high vowels in e.g. nom. pl. form *word*Ø ‘words’ vs. nom. pl. *sci-þu* ‘ships,’ had become opaque in late OE (Fulk 2010, Hogg and Fulk 2011: 108).⁸ Not least, if the $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence was a productive phonological pattern, it could motivate phonological change, i.e., it prompts the hypothetical question: why is there no testable evidence of Open-Syllable Lengthening in Old English? In principle, asking why a particular change *did not* happen is imprudent, but in this case any indication of variable lengthened and unlengthened forms of OE $L + \sigma$ words would be helpful, yet spellings such as e.g. *<baacan> ‘bake,’ *<gaamon> ‘game, joy’ are missing, though we do find long vowels marked in this way, see attested <faa> ‘foe,’ <aa> ‘ever,’ <ææ/ee> ‘law,’ <biswaac> ‘deceived,’ <togaan> ‘separate.’⁹

Several other considerations increase the probability that resolution was a special metrical accommodation, an aspect of the autonomy of metrical form, so clearly demonstrated by the selection and positioning of rhymes or alliterating items in verse. First, the statistics on its lopsided distribution: in the most frequent Type A and Type B verses, comprising jointly 59% of the on-verses and 63% of off-verses in the entire corpus, resolution occurs “considerably more frequently in the on-verse than in the off-verse”; the difference is statistically significant

ameter, ... a meter where each position is a moraic trochee.... Yet those languages contain words with heavy-light-heavy or light-light-light sequences of syllables, which do not fit the hexameter without *special poetic licenses*” (emphasis DM).

⁸ I include the reference to the morphologically-circumscribed High-Vowel Deletion (HVD) because it is frequently used as an argument in favor of the ‘naturalness’ of the $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence. At first blush this would appear to be a valid connection between the early, conservative, non-West-Saxon linguistic properties of the bulk of the OE poetic corpus (see Fulk 2010). However, given the phonetically highly selective application – only high unstressed vowels are affected, and only some paradigms show the apocope – it is not an ironclad argument for the prosody-meter fit even in earlier OE. Note that Fulk 2002 does not invoke HVD as evidence for the linguistic grounding of resolution in OE.

⁹ The logical follow-up on that hypothetical question is why *did* Middle English Open Syllable Lengthening occur if the $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence was not active in the phonology? The response to this is that MEOSL is heavily influenced by phonetic properties, it leaves the high vowels generally unaffected, it is variable if the second syllable is heavy, and it is blocked if the middle consonant is a sonorant (Minkova 1982, 2013). Thus while MEOSL is primarily compensatory for the loss of inflections, the preservation of the moraic equivalence of the input (C)V + V to output (C) VV is epiphenomenal.

(see Hutcheson 1995: 73-77).¹⁰ If resolution were mirroring some linguistic 'naturalness,' it would be hard to explain the differential treatment of the $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence in Types A and B and in Types C and D, as well as its selective application in Types A and B, i.e., the avoidance of resolution in the off-verse.

A second consideration comes from the strong tendency in English at every stage of its history to align stress and weight. Stressed lexical monosyllables were heavy, so the default prosodic template for them respects the weight-to-stress principle. For disyllabic words there is a remarkable imbalance in the distribution of light (17.8%) vs. heavy (82.2%) stressed syllables in OE.¹¹ Since mono- and disyllabic base forms are by far the most frequent type of words in the lexicon, the combined proportion of light vs. heavy stressed syllables in the entire lexicon is much smaller than 17.8%, making such syllables something of a prosodic oddity. In this context resolution as a special convention fits the prediction that such conventions tend to apply to "marginal word types" (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996: 295); OE words containing a stressed (C)V- syllable are good candidates for lexical marginality.

Yet another argument comes from the chronological distribution: had resolution been linguistically-grounded rather than a learned, culturally transmitted accommodation for a rarer type of linguistic structure, we would expect its usage to decline by the end of the tenth century in the south, and the decline should be uniform across the late poems, yet there is no such evidence: Hutcheson (1995: 69) reports that the *Chronicle* poems and *Maldon* show resolution in 40% of the lines, compared to 39% in *Beowulf*, and 21% in *Genesis A*.¹² This surprising tenacity strongly suggests 'tradition.' That traditional accommodation was abandoned in the eleventh century, but again not across the board.¹³ The straightforward assumption, the null hypothesis, would therefore be that there is no testable relationship between a late OE speaker's intuitions about the $H = L + \sigma$ equivalence and a scop's or copyist's alertness to the constraints of meter. Assuming that the persistence of resolution is not driven by an active parallel constraint

¹⁰ The on-verse and off-verse percentages for Type A and Type B are from Hutcheson 1995: 297.

¹¹ The percentages are from Getty 2002: 213-14.

¹² See Griffith 1998 on the Essex/south-east origin of *Maldon*.

¹³ Cable (1991: 55-6) points out that "The metrical anomalies in *The Battle of Maldon* can be called 'late', but they can also be read as superficial, idiosyncratic variations on the classical base." He treats resolution in the eleventh-century poems, other than the metrically strict *The Death of Edward*, as a "doubtful feature"; see also Minkova and Stockwell's conclusion that "Old English metrical practices are better treated as a fossilized reflex of earlier stages in Germanic when the distinction between root and stem still existed, when vowel length was not confined to roots, and when some paradigmatic changes could lend more support to a mora-counting analysis" (1994: 49-50, 60).

in the underlying phonology of late OE is not the same as denying the poets' and scribes' ability to learn to recognize syllable weight; indeed the acquisition of such knowledge must be assumed. Also, the likelihood of careful attention to syllabic weight by the Church-trained clerics who recorded the 'regular' poems is in line with the strong emphasis on Latin in monastic education, see Lapidge 1986.

2. *The ME Poema Morale and its evidential value*

As noted above, in 2002 Fulk published an observant and thought-provoking study which synthesizes and solidifies the arguments in favor of resolution as "a genuine property of Old English verse." The paper also addresses the possibility of continuity of the practice of metrical resolution in the Middle English poem *Poema Morale*. This section revisits the information that one can extract from the versions of this metrically innovative composition.

The early ME *Poema Morale*, also known as *Moral Ode*, or *Conduct of Life* (Hill 1963), survived in six manuscripts, seven copies, a "surprisingly large number" (Pearsall 1977: 90) of witnesses. This suggests, as Fulk (2002: 344) also remarks, that this dreary and fear-inducing piece was a homiletic staple, popular with compilers and local scribes. There is no digitized parallel-text edition, so the modest length of the composition is an advantage for a hands-on labor-intensive philological investigation. The text offers particularly fertile material for comparing and testing the linguistic and metrical features of early ME for several other reasons:

- (a) Date. The unrecoverable original composition, ca. 1170–90 (Hill 1977, Laing 1992) predates or is contemporaneous with the earliest ME verse records, and the available versions range in date from the third quarter of the twelfth century to ca. 1300;¹⁴
- (b) Multiple versions. There are six copies in verse and one written out as if in prose (L = London, Lambeth Palace Library 487), but editors present it in long-line rhyming couplets, which is the format for all but one of the other versions (Morris 1872,

¹⁴ Morris (1873: vii) thought it "probable" that the versions of the poem were transcribed from a late tenth- or early eleventh-century version. Zupitza (1878) showed that attributing all surviving versions of the composition to a single late tenth- or early eleventh-century original, as suggested by Morris (1872, 1873), is untenable. All subsequent scholarship accepts the last quarter of the twelfth century as the most likely date of the composition, see Hill (1977) which is still the most comprehensive survey of the scholarship up to that time; her discussion of the dating and the relationship between the manuscripts remains authoritative.

Hall 1920). The earliest version is T, which along with J, is the least conservative copy (Laing 1992: 576–7).¹⁵

- (c) Metrical coherence. The composition is the earliest English specimen of a *septenary*, an adopted and adapted version of a popular medieval Latin metrical form, the *septenarius*: a long line of four plus three binary feet.

The chronological closeness of the original composition to the time when the tradition of alliterative versification died out makes this text a particularly appealing testing ground. It would not be illogical to assume that it was the work of a poet who had had sufficient exposure to Old English verse to figure out the usefulness of the equivalence of resolution for keeping the meter regular. On the other hand, the unquestionable imitation of a Latin verse template, at a time when Latin resolution, albeit in conjunction with accent, was still a feature of Latin versification (Allen 1973: 167–70, Beare 1956), increases the probability that *if* some such equivalence was intended in *Poema Morale*, it would be modeled on Latin and driven by the metrical properties of the long line. The next sections explore this line of reasoning.

3. *Poema Morale's metrical characteristics*

The septenary of *Poema Morale* is illustrated in the following lines:

- (2) The meter of *Poema Morale*, lines 1–4 (T)

Ich ám nu élder þán ich wás // a wíntre ánd a lóre.
 Ich wéalde móre þán idúde; // mi wít oh tó be móre.
 To lóng^e ich hábbe híld ibén // a wórde ánd a dáde;
 Béih ibí^e a wínter éald, // to júng ich ám on ráde.

¹⁵ The MED and LAEME manuscript references for *Poema Morale* (*PMor*) are given below, arranged in order of presumed date. “None of the manuscripts has clear indications of its date of production; the dates given are those generally accepted on palaeographical grounds.” (Hill 1977, Laing 1992: 579):

Cambridge, Trinity College B.14.52 (335) (Pref.MS for part of text) (**Trin-C B.14.52**) = **T** (398 long lines). **T** is one of the preferred texts for the MED records.
 London, Lambeth Palace Library 487 (Pref.MS for part of text); **Lamb 487** = **L** (267 reconstructed long lines). **L** is one of the preferred texts for the MED records.
 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 4 (**Dgb 4**) = **D** (764 short lines in a single column)
 London, British Library, Egerton 613. Two copies, **Eg 613(1)** = **e** (368 long lines) and **Eg 613(2)** = **E** (398 long lines)
 Oxford, Jesus College 29, Part 2 (**Jes-O 29**) = **J** (388 long lines)
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 123 (**McC 123**) = **M** (335 long lines)

The boldfaced sigla are used in Hill (1977) and Laing (1992: 570). The line counts are from Hill (1977: 98–9). I thank Meg Laing for a careful reading of this paper and for some helpful comments and corrections on the differences between print and eLALME's text treatment.

The two parts of the long line are divided by a metrical caesura, marked with the double slashes here. The mid-line caesura usually coincides with major syntactic boundaries, though we do find the caesura straddling a syntactic phrase in lines such as D 39: *Se man, pet wile siker bien // to habbe godes blisce*, similarly D 43, 45 etc. The line-ends invariably coincide with clausal ends.

The usual parophonological accommodations apply: final *-e* can be elided when followed by a vowel- or weak *h*-initial word, as in *To lónge ich ...* (T 3), also *Wel lát^e ich hábbe mé bipópht //* (L 8).¹⁶ Occasionally final *<-e>* has to be elided before a consonant: *// búte me gód do mílce* (T 8) / *but^e god me nu rede* (L 8); *Sum^e þer habbet lasse murhþ^e //* and *sume habbed more* (L, E 357), but note the off-verse in the last example, which shows that elision before weak */h-/* is not obligatory. The other common accommodations are contraction/syneresis, e.g. *Alto much^el Ic habbe ispend, to lit^el ileid on horde* (T 12); *// þe com^en of hore cunne* (L 202), and syncope of medial syllables in trisyllabic forms, e.g. *ibor^ene : forlor^ene* (T, L, J 105–6). These accommodations are considered authorial (Hall 1920: 329).

The rhythm in the Latin septenarius compositions is usually trochaic, yet in *Poema Morale* the dominant rhythm is unmistakably iambic.¹⁷ Unstressed verse-initial pronouns, prepositions, particles, adverbs, conjunctions are frequent in both hemistichs, referred to as the on- and the off-verse here. Headless seven-syllable on-verses, e.g. *Þéih ibí^e a wínter éald*, (T 4), cited in (2); *hóu^ene and orþ^e and al þet is* (L 81), are common, making the terminological decision whether such verses are headless iambic or catalectic trochaic (missing a final weak syllable) arbitrary.¹⁸ On-verses with eight syllables are very rarely trochaic: *Nábbeð hie no þing forzíet^en //* of þat hi^e her iseien (T 98), but compare *And nábbeð hí naþing forzíet^en //* of al þet ho [ere] isezen (L98), see also T 13 in (3). Similar variability appears in the three-beat off-verse; off-verses such as *// sóre imé adráde* (T 6), *// búte me gód do mílce* (T8) are regular trochaic trimeters, yet note that all of the off-verses in (2) start iambically, a very common variant, and they could be analyzed as headless lines ending with an extrametrical seventh light syllable. This situation is familiar from other types of verse; the embedding of trochaic lines in iambic verse, headlessness, initial inversions, are common in the later tetrameters and pentameters. Because of these variables, the overall syllable

¹⁶ Elision or syncope of unstressed *<e>* is marked with a superscript ^e.

¹⁷ On the dominance of iambic rhythms in the poem see Schipper 1910: 192–3.

¹⁸ The terms *catalexis/catalectic* are not used in the same way in the scholarly literature. I use *catalexis* to mean “Absence of a syllable in the last foot of a verse” (OED). If we take the entire septenary line as trochaic, assuming a matching number of feet in the two hemistichs, the off-verse in e.g. T 13, cited in (3) are also catalectic. Lines missing a verse-initial weak syllable are *headless*, avoiding the rather grim synonym *acephalous*.

count of the full line – excluding problematic lines – is in the range of 13–15 syllables.

(3) Syllabic variability of the *Poema Morale* septenary:

Mást al þát me líked éar, // nú hit mé mislícað (13 syllables) (T 13)
 Péih ibíe a wínter éald, // to júng ich ám on ráde (14 syllables) (T 4)
 Ich ám nu élder þán ich wás // a wíntre ánd a lóre. (15 syllables) (T 1)

Hall (1920: 328–9) allows doubly-filled weak positions, raising the syllable count to sixteen, as in *for þer we hit michte finden eft. // and habben buten ende* (L, D 52), but his scansion of the on-verse ignores the possibility of elision in *michte*, which would make the line regular, compare also T 52: *For þat we mihte finden eft // and habb^en abuten ende*. Although the structure of the poem has sometimes been considered irregular, especially in contrast to the *Ormulum* (see Schipper 1910, Hall 1920), its seven-foot structure is in fact normative – this is also clear from the comparison of the multiple witnesses (Marcus 1934, Hill 1977). The regularity of seven binary feet is shared with the structure of the *Ormulum*, with which *Poema Morale* is always compared, but the astonishing precision of the *Ormulum* septenary applies to both foot-structure and syllabic count: in the *Ormulum* every line is exactly fifteen syllables long.¹⁹ We will return to the significance of the metrical characteristics of *Poema Morale* below in section 6.

4. Right edge prosodic choices

As is clear from the opening passage cited above in section 2, the long lines are arranged in rhyming couplets. The rhymes are invariably feminine (– $\acute{o}$ σ), and the stressed syllable is invariably heavy.²⁰ Words

¹⁹ Kaluza describes Orm's verse as "the verse of a scholar, who had no feeling for the metre of popular poetry, and it has therefore, had no influence at all on later poets" (1911: 158). This is off the mark in the dismissal of the regular iambic rhythm as the rhythm of so much of the poetry to come, but the "scholarly" exactness of the syllable count in such an early composition is indeed striking. Orm's ability to discriminate weight in his orthography is legendary (to all twenty or so living philologists who care); his use of orthography to indicate syllable structure is argued most cogently in Fulk (1997).

²⁰ This excludes occasional imperfect orthographically masculine forms in rhymes, contra Marcus (1934: 29, 35, 139). The matching of // *bi-forⁿ þe heuen king* : // *after ur^e erninge* (L 63–4); *leden* : *of dred* (L 93–4), *fond* : *freonde* (L 219–20) is another indication that applying the paraphonological adjustments to unstressed vowels in the scansion is justified. Even for non-northern scribes/speakers in the very early chronological span of the seven witnesses of PM, final -e was unstable and in speech it would have been hard to distinguish between a lightly articulated final schwa and a heavily released final consonant – note that in all rhyming cases the missing orthographic <e> follows a voiced stop. Marcus (1934: 31, 140) assumes unrealized final <e>s at the end of the off-verse after heavy syllables (he says "long vowels"), thus he scans *stund^e* // (D149), *wis^e* // (D 271) as monosyllabic, but the metrical structure does not compel such a conclusion.

with stressed light syllables such as OE *bacan* 'bake,' *draca* 'snake,' *eten* 'eat,' i.e. candidates for Open-Syllable Lengthening, are systematically avoided in this position, a good indication that lengthening had not occurred either in the original composition or the copyists' dialects.

The choice of items acceptable in the last foot of the long line needs further elaboration. Describing the meter of the poem, Fulk (2002: 344) makes two very important points, cited in full because they will be central to the interpretation of the data proposed here:

The meter is like that of the *rímur* ..., with prolongation of the final foot to compensate for the fact that the second hemistich contains three rather than four feet. For that reason, just as in the *Ormulum*, an etymologically heavy syllable is required in the penult of the line (see Fulk 1996: 487–9).

The first observation is supported solidly both in metrical typologies across many languages and 4 + 3-foot verse-forms – see Burling (1966) and Fulk (1996) on the parallels between the Icelandic *rímur* and Orm's meter – and in the more general tendency towards prosodic domain-final strengthening; recall that the end of the off-verse is aligned with the end of the clause, i.e. the end of the intonation phrase.²¹ In addition, the final foot is where the rhyme is located, and it is the rhymes that hold the couplets together. It is not surprising that this structurally crucial position is the location of the strictest observance of the weight requirement; it is in accordance with the principle of "beginnings free, endings strict" in many verse traditions.²² By providing the metrical and syntactic closure, the rhyme position is subject to a conjoint constraint of identity, syllabic composition, -6̊ σ, and weight. These attributes are phonological in nature, but the conscious selection of segmentally and prosodically identical structures and their non-random placement is motivated purely by the exigencies of verse composition. The rhymes in *Poema Morale* are remarkably exact; the almost complete absence of light penultimate syllables at the end of the off-verse is equally remarkable. Like the East Midlands, near contemporary Orm, the copyists of the *Poema Morale* chose the words filling the end of the line with care and accuracy.

²¹ The strengthening effect of the prosodic boundary in English can be measured both for accented syllables and for final post-accented syllables as shown by Yoon et al. (2007). The 4 + 3 verse lines can be treated as identical/isochronous 4 + 3 + silent beat, especially in performance, and in song, where the last word is lengthened, "producing a saliency effect characteristic of terminal elements" (Kiparsky 2006). For a discussion and formalization of the "long-last" constraint in metrics see Hayes and MacEachern 1998.

²² Note that this contradicts Russom's (1987: 49–50) interpretation of the closure principle in Old English verse: "Minimize complexity in the second half-line" which would imply that the aggregate restriction of rhyme, weight, and syllable count for an (-6̊ σ) closure is less complex than the lack of such a restriction.

The second observation regarding the weight of the last stressed syllable of the off-verse is also borne out. As noted above, (C)V-CV(C) words of the type *baken*, *drake*, *eten* do not appear in rhyme position. Fulk (2012: 131) considers the rhyme *houene* : *souene* (L lines 25–6) as representing a resolved light stressed syllable, which is one way of analyzing the rhyme, but another possibility is that both words are syncopated, compare: *to hou^ene rich^e hi sculen faren // forþ mid ure drihte* (L 176) where *houene* must be disyllabic, see also Hall (1920, II: 328). Two other possible candidates for a resolved line-final ictus are *wunien*: *bi-sunien* (L 151–2) and *bi-werien*: *derien* (T 337–8, L 333–4). For *wunien* ‘live,’ OE *wunian* compare: *þer hi sculen wunien // a buten are and ende* L 179); *Nones godes hem nis wane // þe wunioð him abuten* (T 368): *þe eure scullen wunien þer // bliþe muw^en ben eþe* (E 372). Again, one way of scanning the word is as ‘resolved’ in all positions, including verse-internally. Another option is the possibility that the weak verb suffix is monosyllabic [-jən] and there is glide fortition in syllable-initial position, whereby the [-j-] behaves as a regular palatal approximant, i.e. it is [+ consonantal], rendering the first syllables of words like *wunien*, *derien* heavy. Thus, while resolution similar to OE resolution is one way of analyzing these instances, the parophonological accommodations offer an alternative account.²³

The next set of philological details I want to turn to also concerns syllabification and the patterns of stressed-syllable placement in relation to weight. Following up on an observation in Schipper (1910: 193), and more extensively in Marcus (1934: 32), Fulk (2002) cites twenty lines from the first 100 long lines of the poem, which he scans as having a resolved final foot in the on-verse. His original and very important point is that “In each instance the final syllable of the italicized word disrupts the meter, creating a thesis of two unstressed syllables” (2002: 347). For the sake of clarity, I reproduce the verses cited in Fulk’s analysis of the poem:

- (4) On-verses with a resolved final foot in *Poema Morale* (from Fulk 2002: 347):²⁴

<i>ic welde more þanne ic dede; // mi wit oh to bi more</i> <i>Do ech to gode þet hi muze, // þer wile hi bieð a liue</i>	(2) (23)
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²³ For pairs such as *cunne* [vrr. *kunne*, *kenne*] ‘kin’ rhyming with *sunne* ‘sin’ nom. sg. (L 201–2) the most likely explanation for the choice of the nominative form, as in // *ac muchel wes þa sunne* (L 201) is that offered in Fulk (1998) for the *Ormulum*, i.e. the spelling of a form which would not have preserved a word-final geminate was in line with the need of orthographic marking of syllable structure. Another example is the variable spelling of OF *ben* ‘good,’ possibly with a short vowel, which appears as *benne* in D 339, but *bene* in T, e, E, M.

²⁴ All citations are from Bodleian 1605, i.e. Digby A 4 (D), the third earliest out of seven manuscripts, dated to about 1200, based on Marcus (1934). The italics are Fulk’s; I have taken the liberty of boldfacing the items that may warrant further consideration.

Ne [lipnie] no man to <i>muchel</i> // to childe ne to wiue	(24)
Ne hopie wif to hire <i>were</i> , // ne were to his wiue	(31)
Vor sone willeð hine <i>uorziete</i> // þo fremde and þo sibbe	(34)
Se deð his e3the on sikere <i>stede</i> // þet sent hi to heueriche	(42)
þer ne mai hit him <i>binimen</i> // se loþe ne se lieue	(44)
þider we sendeð and selue <i>bereð</i> // to litel and to selde	(46)
For þer ne mai hit us <i>binime</i> // ne king ne his serreue	(50)
3ieue hi for godes <i>loue</i> , // þanne deð he hi wel ihialde	(56)
Euel we doð al to <i>muchel</i> , // god lesse þanne we solde	(60)
Aider to litel and to <i>muchel</i> // sal þenchen eft hem boðe	(62)
þer me sal ure werkes <i>we3e</i> // biuore þe heueneking	(63)
þet is si wonderlicheste <i>ware</i> // þet ani man eure vonde	(68)
Alle his workes and his <i>we3es</i> // is milce and rihtwisnesse	(72)
Nis him ec no þing <i>uorhole</i> , // swo muchel bieð his mihte	(77)
He is buuen us and <i>bineþen</i> , // biuoren and bihinde	(87)
We þet godes hesne <i>brekeð</i> // and gelteð swo ilome	(91)
We þet neure god ne <i>dede</i> // þan heuenliche deme	(96)
þer sulle deoflen bi swo <i>uele</i> // þet willeð keðen þere	(97)

Quite rightly, verses in which the post-caesural initial sound is a vowel or /h-/ are not considered informative. Off-verses followed by trochaic on-verses, e.g. *He sal cum^en on eu^ele stede, // but^e gód him bi milde* (D 26) will be kept out of the picture, following Fulk's caution that the final syllable of the on-verse may be filling a missing initial upbeat.²⁵

Concentrating on the selection in (4) calls for some additional comments. In (24), (60), (62) the disruptive form is *muchel* by virtue of the iambic beginning of the off-verses. However, as Fulk (2002: 345) notes, this is one of the lexical items, along with *comen*, *litel*, often cited as an example of syneresis (*Ál to múch^el ic hább^e ispént //* (D 28)), opening up the possibility of this word being monosyllabic. Once that type of conditioned alternation is testable in elision, it is not improbable that a syncopated variant can appear outside the original trigger environment.²⁶ I concur that these examples belong in the unfortunately rather large heap of ambiguous verses.

Another ambiguity arises in (63) and (72). In (63) *we3e* (D) alternates with *weizen* (T) ~ *weien* (L) ~ *weyen* (J). The diphthongization of front vowels + the palatal glide /j/ in word-final position is a process that goes back to OE (Minkova 2014: 6.5.3, 7.4). Once diphthongization occurs, the vowel behaves phonologically like a long vowel.

²⁵ The way the footing and the syllable count is interpreted earlier in this section makes this precaution unnecessary, but for compatibility and in order to look only at unambiguous data, such lines are excluded from consideration. That should not affect the substance of the argument.

²⁶ In LAEME's database there are 104 cases and 341 tokens of potentially monosyllabic <*much^e*>.

The possibility of a long vowel is suggested also by line-final rhyme *e3ie* ‘fear’ (OE *eġe*) : *leie* ‘lie’ (OE *lyġe*) in D 279–80, *eie* : *leie* in T, E 277–8. Such changes are implemented gradually in the lexicon, and we cannot reconstruct the chronology with precision, but in the face of uncertainty of this kind, it would be prudent to file (63) and (72) with the ‘ambiguous’ lines – note also that (72) is in elision environment. A similar consideration might conceivably apply to (23) *mu3e* (D 23) ‘may, might’, which appears as *muwen* in (J), and the same line in the earlier T copy has the word in elision environment: *Do al to gode þat he mu3^e ech þe hwile he beð aliue* (T 23); admittedly the line is metrically inconsistent.

Finally, the form *brekeð* in (D 91) is considered unsyncopated before a vowel on account of the plural inflection (Fulk 2002: fn. 20).²⁷ While the grammatical distinction is important, and cannot be dismissed, one should also note the possibility of plural *-eð* syncopation in both light and heavy stems by the same scribe, as in *3eueð* in: *We 3eueð uneaðe uor his loue* // (D191), also T and L; *nabbeð* in: // *nabbeð hi none blisce* (D 237), also in L. Again, this is not a quantitative argument, but a red flag: if a phonetic variant is attested and applied elsewhere by the scribe, we will do better to set the line aside.

Another quite striking discovery Fulk made about the distribution of heavy and light stressed syllables in the poem is that the rate of occurrence of the items cited in (4), even if their number is reduced to 13, is disproportionately high; “in the first hundred lines of the poem there is not a single instance of a corresponding verse with an etymologically heavy syllable in the relevant position” (2002: 350). This is indeed the case – the only example I can identify in (D) is: *Wis is þet hine bi þencheð* // *þo hwile þet he mot libbe* (D 33); *Wis þe him selue biðencheð* // *þe hwile he mót libben* (T33). This is a puzzle, but since Fulk also remarked that this disproportion is not so glaring in the rest of the poem, I checked to see what the attestations are. In the remaining lines in the Digby 4-based edition (Marcus 1934) heavy and light stressed disyllabic words at the end of the on-line when the off-line starts

²⁷ Indeed it looks like the Digby 4 copyist was heavily inclined to syncopate his third pers. sg. pr. tense inflections: “Excluding verbs with vocalic stems such as do and go, the numbers of syncopated (S) versus un syncopated (U) endings are as follows: T has 21 S, 46 U; L has 24 S, 31 U; D has 34 S, 50 U; e has 45 S, 33 U; E has 37 S, 43 U; J has 20 S, 43 U; M has 39 S, 37 U. 4.” (Laing 2002: 579, fn. 13). Marcus (1934: 154–5) assumes “frequent syncope” of the pres. pl. inflection, scanning *bereð* (46), *brekeð* (91), *3eueð* (191), *uareð* (234, 344, 347 etc.), *comeð* (236), *spekeð* (276) as monosyllabic. Although this text is not part of the LALME questionnaire – the print LALME entry is for Jesus 29 as a whole not just *Poema Morale* – I checked to see its records of the status of these inflections. In LALME the principles of recording the present plural verb inflections “are the same as those for the suffix of the 3sg.” (Questionnaire notes, item 62: http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme_quaire_notes.html). Map 654 shows *all* southern present plural forms without distinguishing syncopated and unsyncopated forms.

iambically and the first sound is a consonant are balanced slightly (14 to 19) in favor of the type shown in (5b). Here are examples of the relevant types:

- (5) Light vs. heavy disyllables at the end of the on-verse in Digby 4, lines 100–200:
- (a) Light: Al hi habbeð on her *write*, // þet we misdeden hiere (D 101)²⁸
 - (b) Heavy: Þet he ne muʒ^e þanne bidde *ore*, // vor þet itit ilome (D125)²⁹

The scribes did take some liberties with word-choice and word-order, yet a quick scan of the T and L MSS lines 100–200 as a control group shows a comparable balance: six lines of the type shown in 5(a): T, L 105, 139, 165, 174, 180, 192, and seven heavy off-verse final beats: 115, 125, 143, 152, 155, 190, 191. So while the first 100 lines do show a lopsided result, the rest of the poem suggests randomness in the choice of L+σ vs. H+σ in the same segmental and metrical environments. Cumulatively, such findings can hardly be described as a solid empirical foundation warranting firm conclusions; situations like that invite alternative hypotheses. What Fulk's philological magnifying glass reveals is indeed a distributional anomaly, but I believe that the metrical account for it should focus on the hierarchical structure of the long line.

5. Reading the metrical mind of a medieval copyist

In sections 3–4 the textual references are drawn mostly from the Marcus (1934) edition of version D (Digby 4), the primary, though not exclusive, source of reference in Fulk (2002). There are two notable points about the D copy: first, this is the only vernacular text in the manuscript. The inclusion of a homiletic vernacular text in the collection is a good indication that the compiler of the codex was proficient in Latin and treated the poem as well-suited to the linguistic competence of the target audience.³⁰ Some of the Latin texts in Digby 4 are

²⁸ Similarly D 127, 182 (*dure*), 156, 176, 372 (*come*, *comen*, but note Fulk's note on this item above), 167 (*gramed*), 215, 263 ((*vor*)*seue(n)*), 234, 364 (*chele*), 267 (*deden*), 276 (*speked*; questionable – the line is *þo ter^eð and freteð pet eu^el speke^eð, þo ondfull^e and þo prude*), 336 (*loue*), 345 (*vare*).

²⁹ Similarly D 116 (*workes*), 141 (*þannes*), 145 (*swete*), 148 (*pine*), 157 (*dome*), 187 (*meie* 'kinsman'), 224, 316 (*wele*), 251 (*brenneð*), 256 (*werkes* – Fulk notes that -es is unetymological), 271 (*wise*), 309 (*singed*), 311 (*uolued*), 337 (*ibede*), 347 (*hesne*), 357, 370 (*wane*), 388 (*bet^ere* – syncopation likely in the line: *he on^e is much^ele mor^e and bet^ere, þann^e alle opre þinges*).

³⁰ The septenarius in twelfth- to thirteenth-century Latin compositions is commonly used for satirical verse and commentary on current events. Two examples from Digby 4, cited in Wright 1844:

in fact goliardic verse in septenarius form. It is not too far-fetched to assume that the scribe responsible for the vernacular poem was an equally competent scanner of Latin verse. Although the hand of *Poema Morale* is unique in the codex (Laing 1992: 570), the scribe must have had the same training and language skills as the rest of the scribes working in the Benedictine cathedral priory of Holy Trinity or Christ Church where Digby 4 comes from. The second interesting fact about the D text is that the long verse lines are divided at the caesura into half lines turning the rhyming couplets into quatrains each beginning with an offset *littera notabilior*.³¹ This visual highlighting of the metrical structure makes D a really valuable source; unfortunately, Hill's (1977: 100–1) discussion of the dating, provenance, and editorial history of *Poema Morale* makes it clear that Marcus's edition suffers from "personal" reconstructions and omissions. The MED editors in fact ignore the Marcus edition; instead, they go with Zupitza (1878). Important as these questions are for codicologists, the comparisons of D with other versions in Fulk (2002) and my own searches and comparisons of the forms discussed in sections 3 and 4 did not reveal a substantive difference in the metrical treatment of the lines and the half lines.

The distinct dialect choices and orthographic practices of the copyists do not disrupt the composition's metrical parameters above the foot level – the number of feet is the same across the exemplars, and so is the correspondence between stress and strong metrical position in pre-pausal sites: the end of the first half line and the line end. This is also the finding in Hill (1977: 103) with respect to lexical and grammatical variation. Her most thorough comparison and analysis of the texts confirm that "There is, in fact, no 'correct' version of the *Conduct of Life*. Each copy represents a reshaping within an established rhythmical and metrical structure" (1977: 106).³² The "established rhythmical and

Mores habent barbarus, Latinus, et Graecus,
Si sacerdos ut plebs est caecum ducit caecus:
Se mares effeminant, et equa fit equus,
Expectes ab homine usque ad pecus.

The familiarity of the form and its transferability is also confirmed by macaronic verse:

A la feste sui venus; et ostendam quare
Singulorum singulos mores explicare.

³¹ See http://archive.ling.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme2_scripts/search_cross_ref.php?field-Val=Oxford,%20Bodleian%20Library,%20Digby%204. The *Poema Morale* version in D is "clearly of Kent but seems to fit best somewhat to the west of Canterbury itself." It is dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

³² This is not a dismissal of the entirely appropriate and very informative close comparison of the *Poema Morale* versions in Laing 1992. The point is that while the parallel texts differ in lexical and grammatical usage, the rhythmical structure of the verse is stable in all versions, minus occasional, and predictable, "bad" lines.

metrical structure" allows us to project our modern understanding of ME stress and meter back and treat the abstract template in Figure 7.1 below as shared by the poet, the copyists, and the audience of the poem; they were of one metrical mind.

6. Towards a resolution of metrical resolution

In section 3 we addressed the poem's metrical structure. The septenary's metrical template, alternating right-strong (S) and weak (W) all the way up, is schematized in Figure 7.1:

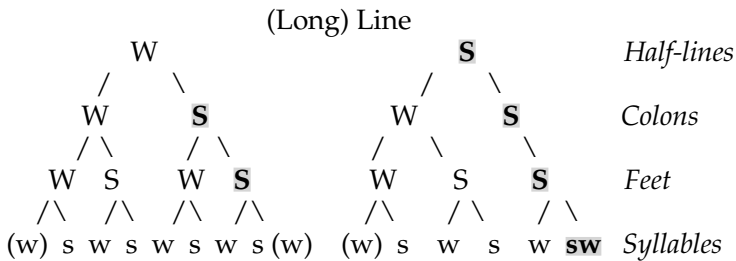


Figure 7.1: Strength relations in the septenary long line

The schema is based on a basic iambic rhythm across the line. The post-pausal nodes, the first positions in the on- and off-verse, are structurally weakest and allow maximum flexibility, including headlessness in both halves. Catalexis is allowed in the on-line, but not in the off-line. It is only in the last beat/strong syllable of the second half line that all nodes are strong all the way up in the hierarchy.

Following Hanson and Kiparsky's (1996) parametric theory of meter, we can identify the structural parameters which define this particular type of meter and which are intuitively deduced or culturally transmitted, and consciously maintained, as set in terms of foot-count, and headedness at and above the colon level. These properties of the line are independent of the language-specific phonological structure and can be transferred from one language to another. As the example in fn. 30 shows, there can be mixed-language lines, and the form is not period-specific.³³

Then there are other parameters, which define the realization of the structural properties: the linguistic units that fill a metrical position

³³ The septenary is extensively used in later English poetry too. Schipper (1910: 196 ff.) discusses its relation to ballad meter and 'Common Metre' (4 + 3 feet, masculine ending). Of special interest is his remark that although masculine rhymes are more common, the feminine rhyme can be regularly employed, as in Burns's *John Taylor* (1789):

may vary in different traditions, but for the septenarius/septenary, the basic metrical unit is the foot (*position size* parameter). The components of the foot, the syllables, are the site where the prominence relation has to be observed, i.e. strong metrical positions have to correspond to linguistic stress (*prominence site* parameter). A third parameter (*prominence type* parameter) defines which linguistic oppositions are relevant for the meter: weight (heavy vs. light), stress, pitch accent. Crucially, the realization parameters can be cumulative, i.e. weight and stress may have to be conjoined to fulfill the prominence type parameter.

In addition to these unhierarchized settings, which rely on existing linguistic contrasts, there is the meter-specific hierarchical organization of the line. The shaded strong branches of the nodes in Figure 7.1 are intended to indicate that the strength of the feet is unequal: the first foot weak position is dominated by Ws, while the last foot stressed position is dominated by Ss. The last strong branch of the line-final foot is the only unit linked to three strong nodes. Stepping back from this abstraction, we can recall from section 4 that this is the rhyme position and it is particularly strong and particularly complex, being subject to a conjoint constraint of identity, syllabic composition (–ó σ), and weight. It is not accidental that the constraints on line-final poetic closure are very loyally observed both in *Poema Morale* and in the *Ormulum*. Of relevance also is the fact that the lines are end-stopped, there is no enjambment at the end of the line; the right boundary of the line is always co-extensive with the clausal boundary.³⁴

The really salient observation that in *Poema Morale* (and in the *Ormulum*) stressed light syllables are allowed in the last foot of the first half line but are blocked from appearing line-finally remains, but it can now be interpreted in the framework of Figure 7.1. The principal difference between the right edges of the half lines is that the seventh foot is subject to metrical constraints which are not applicable elsewhere. If resolution were the motivation behind the choice of word-placement, we would expect at least *some* of the items cited in note 28, words such as *love, come, makede* to find their way into the line-end – they have the right stress and syllabic count profile. The fact that they *can* appear elsewhere, but not at line-ends is a matter of conscious exclusion of certain phonological strings. When for one reason or another the item

With Pegasus upon a day,
Apollo, weary flying,
Through frosty hills the journey lay,
On foot the way was plying.

³⁴ Closure is defined in Hanson and Kiparsky as “an overriding principle which governs metrical constraints and metrical variation within a given meter. Thus, a poet, or a tradition, may have a rule whereby a constraint is relaxed on an initial position, or on an initial foot, but not on a final or other non-initial position or foot. ... No doubt it also dictates default preferences and underlies certain esthetic effects” (1996: 293).

is ambiguous, e.g. *sib(be)* 'kinsfolk' (D 34), the orthographic doubling of the consonant even in the nominative guarantees that the weight of the relevant syllable is not violated (see note 23).

The alternative to positing resolution in the on-verse is to treat the lack of resolvable sequences at the end of the line as tightening (segmental identity), strengthening (heavy syllable marked orthographically), and lengthening (obligatory feminine ending). The first half line does not participate in the rhyme schema – the choice of lexical items is much freer. The first half line accommodates both types of stressed syllables at its right edge. The first half line ends in a lexical monosyllable in about 50% of the lines, and if one counts elided weak syllables, the proportion of monosyllables in that position goes up to about 70%.³⁵ The line-end requires the realization, one would assume both orthographically and in performance, of a light syllable, even if it is not normative or invariably realized in the spoken language.³⁶

The opening section of this paper reviewed the considerations which make it doubtful that metrical resolution in late OE alliterative verse was a choice driven by the phonological properties of the language. By the eleventh century the maintenance of resolution was a purely metrical convention, which arose because of explicit preference for metrical prominence settings in terms of moraic count. The rationale for these preferences became progressively obscured, but, to cite Hanson and Kiparsky: "whether the basis of these preferences is understood by the poets who use them or not, the choices themselves are consciously made. Particular settings may also be associated by convention with a particular style and hence subject to constraints from the tradition" (1996: 294).

The ME *Poema Morale* is an excellent ground for scrutinizing the metrical practices of the copyists of the earliest post-Conquest regular stress-alternating metrical form. The restricted placement of $L + \sigma$ words appears to suggest that the OE convention of moraic equivalence, $H = L + \sigma$ continued to be an active metrical constraint. This is not inconceivable, yet a reevaluation of the evidential base reduces the probability of resolution as a component of the septenary meter. Instead, the occasional placement of $L + \sigma$ words at the end of the on-line can be interpreted as a relaxation of the principle of closure. In the septenary, closure involves categorical exemption of $L + \sigma$ words at line-ends; this prosodic constraint is accompanied by right-alignment of meter and syntax. In the lower-lever on-line closure the restrictions on rhyme, stressed syllable weight, the realization of a final unstressed syllable, and syntax-meter alignment are lifted.

³⁵ My estimate is based on a pilot sample of 50 lines (lines 50–100) in the D version.

³⁶ Compare the Modern French realization of 'dance' in *Sur le Pont d'Avignon l'on y danse, l'on y danse*.

Relating this complex picture to the evolution of English versification, rather than to the continuity of resolution, is not a radical proposal. Clearly the septenarius was a non-native form, but there was nothing in the linguistic competence of the speakers exposed to it that would be a barrier to its adoption. The serendipitous survival of seven different copies from the hands of seven different individuals coming from different non-northern dialect regions and different centers of literary work is reassuring in terms of the metrical uniformity of the witnesses; they were all 'on board' with the metrical innovations.³⁷ The bias against stressed light syllables was easy to implement given the lexical imbalance of light (17.8%) vs. heavy (82.2%) stressed syllables noted for OE in section 1.

Although the conclusions in this study remain speculative, revisiting the vexed issue of the placement of heavy and light syllables in the earliest ME Latin-based septenary poem allows us to see some new aspects of the relationship between scribal practice, language change, and cultural conventions. A full-scale statistical study of all distributional properties of all versions of *Poema Morale* is still outstanding, but at least until we know more, we can see the choices made by the poet and respected by the scribes as emblematic of the emergence and embedding of new metrical traditions in medieval England.³⁸

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³⁷ The print LALME linguistic profile for Jesus 29 places *Poema Morale* in Herefordshire (vol. 1. 153, LP 7440); on D see note 31. Incidentally, Walter Map (1140–ca. 1208–10), who uses the septenarius in some of his Latin goliardic compositions, was also a Herefordshire man. The metrical connection is hypothetical, of course, but the metrical uniformity of the witnesses suggests that it has to be separated from other kinds of scribal diversity on which Pearsall writes: "... in the small houses – and ... that this is where some of the manuscripts are found [MSS of *Poema Morale*, with reference to Hill (1963)] – a greater variety of practice prevailed, depending on individual members and local traditions" (1977: 90). The stability of the metrical form can be seen as a parallel to 'unaltered' written forms in multiple copies of the same text, which arguably represent "part of the scribe's written dialect" (Hudson 1966: 371), only in this case it is a matter of the scribes' shared metrical 'dialect.'

³⁸ "The choices originate in cultural traditions, but evolve through competing efforts to maximize their naturalness on the one hand, and the scope for artifice that they afford on the other. Periods of literary renewal offer particularly instructive instances of this competition" (Hanson and Kiparsky 1996: 288).

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The Syntax of Old English Poetry and the Dating of *Beowulf*

Aaron Ecay and Susan Pintzuk

The epic poem *Beowulf* is one of the best known and most widely translated of the extant Old English texts. Nevertheless, despite more than a century of scholarly debate, there is no absolute agreement on when the poem was written. Although a date of about 1000 is generally accepted for the one surviving manuscript, various types of evidence – archaeological, codicological, cultural, historical, linguistic, metrical, onomastic, paleographical, philological, political, semantic, sociological, theological – identify the poem's date of composition at various points between the seventh and the early eleventh centuries.¹ Much of the linguistic evidence has been phonological (i.e., metrical) and morphological in nature rather than syntactic. Although some grammatical criteria have been developed for dating,² they are not developed within current generative syntactic frameworks but rather based upon word order and the selection of lexical items that do not necessarily reflect syntactic distinctions. This is not surprising, for at least four reasons. First, much of the work on grammatical dating criteria was carried out before linguists started to investigate the formal syntax of Old English in generative frameworks. Second, most syntacticians do not attempt to analyze the language of poetry, since the syntax may be influenced by poetic constraints that do not affect prose texts and thus add an extra layer of difficulty to the investigation. Third, it is only within the last three decades that we have accumulated sufficient knowledge about the syntax of Old English prose and the quantitative patterns of syntactic variation and change during the Old English period to enable us to start to analyze the poetry. And finally, scholars writing before the release of two annotated corpora – the York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry (YCOEP) in 2002 and the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE) in 2003 – were handicapped by not having the benefit

¹ For overviews of the literature on the dating of *Beowulf*, see Amos 1980, Chase 1981, Fulk 1992, Neidorf 2014, *inter alia*.

² See Amos 1980 for an evaluation of linguistic criteria for dating, including syntactic and grammatical tests in chapter 2.

of being able to collect and quantitatively analyze Old English data quickly and easily.

Fulk has clearly expressed his views on the nature of evidence and argumentation in linguistics:

most science is built on hypothesis formation, and hypotheses can never be proved in the mathematical sense, but can only be rendered extremely probable. (Fulk 1992: 8)

Attitudes are rather different in regard to the status of probabilistic evidence in the field of philology, which is to a great extent a branch of historical linguistics, a field that professes to be governed by scientific principles. Hypotheses do not merely coexist but are always in competition with other hypotheses, jockeying for position, always aiming to come out on top. And although a hypothesis can never be proved correct, by various means it can be rendered so very probable that it demands credence ... Philology is thus by nature very much at odds with what many literary scholars believe, because the purpose of philology is to narrow the range of possible interpretations rather than to treat all reasonable ones as equal.

One means of rendering a hypothesis probable is to show that it explains a wider variety of facts than any competing hypothesis. What this means in regard to philology and the dating of *Beowulf* is that if there are linguistic features of an archaic nature in the poem, the greater the number of such features that can be identified, the likelier the explanation that they result from the poem's first having been committed to parchment at a relatively early date. The hypothesis that the poem is an early composition can never be proved, first of all, because no hypothesis can be proved conclusively, but secondly and more particularly because it is possible that the *Beowulf* poet simply knew more about the ancient traditions of verse composition, and about the Old English language, than other Old English poets. Some scholars seem to believe this latter possibility is correct, but it should be recognized that it faces certain obstacles. One is that it involves a certain kind of special pleading in the form of an unusual circumstance, and so it is the more complex hypothesis, and Occam's razor tells us that, *ceteris paribus*, the simpler hypothesis is to be preferred. A more estimable problem is that if the *Beowulf* poet were a late *scop* who happened to use rather archaic language, it is surprising that he never makes the mistake of mixing undeniable neologisms into this verse. And the greater the variety of archaic linguistic features there are to be found in the poem, the more difficult it is to believe that the poet's knowledge of archaic language was wholly artificial. (Fulk 2014: 23–4)

We embrace Fulk's views on linguistic evidence and argumentation, and we accept his evidence and conclusions, presented in careful detail in Fulk 1992 and elsewhere, that *Beowulf* is one of the earliest Old English poems – and in fact one of the earliest Old English texts of any *genre*. We take this as our hypothesis, and present

evidence to support it in the remainder of this chapter. We show how syntactic and statistical evidence can be used to date the language of *Beowulf* and other Old English texts, both poetry and prose, by taking into account syntactic variation and change during the Old English period. Although Amos concluded that “An author’s sentence structure does not provide a reliable indication of the date of his work” (1980: 140), we will present counter-evidence to her conclusion in section 4.

1. Background

1.1. Old English syntax

In this section we present a description of the constituent orders characteristic of Old English, so that the criteria that are presented in section 3 and quantitatively analyzed in section 4 can be readily understood. We make one very basic assumption: clauses have an underlying structure and constituent order, which may be modified by the movement of constituents rightward or leftward from their original structural and linear position. We have attempted to keep the descriptions of these structures and movements brief and non-formal, although sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 on verbal syntax are necessarily somewhat complex and detailed. Formal syntactic accounts of the phenomena discussed below can be found in the cited references.

1.1.1. THE POSITION OF THE FINITE VERB

Modern Germanic languages are generally verb-second (V2) languages, and thus obey one of two generalizations about the position of the finite verb within the clause. In asymmetric V2 languages, like Dutch and German, the finite verb appears in second position in main clauses after the topicalized constituent in initial position, and in final position in subordinate clauses. In symmetric V2 languages, like Icelandic and Yiddish, the finite verb is in second position in all clause types. Old English has sometimes been classified as a verb-second language: see van Kemenade 1987 for the first formal analysis of Old English as an asymmetric V2 language much like Modern Dutch. There are two obvious reasons for analyzing Old English syntax in this way: first, Proto-Germanic was a V2 language, and all of its descendants, with the exception of Modern English, are V2; it is therefore plausible that the earliest stage of English was also V2 and that the V2 constraint was lost at some point in the history of the language. Second, most Old English main clauses have the verb in second position, and

most subordinate clauses have the verb in final position, so that the position of the finite verb is similar to the position of the finite verb in an asymmetric V2 language. However, Old English texts contain many exceptions to the V2 constraint: finite verbs may appear in final position in main clauses, in second position in subordinate clauses, and in first, third, fourth, or even fifth position in both clause types, as illustrated in (1) and (2);³ see Pintzuk 1999 for a detailed critique of van Kemenade's analysis.

(1) Main clauses

- a. finite verb in first position
 Āsende ūre hælend Crīst his hālgan engel mid þe
 Send our saviour Christ his holy angel with you
 "Our Savior Christ send his holy angel with you"
 (coaelive,+ALS_[Apollinaris]:25.4543)
- b. finite verb in second position
 God **geworhte** on anginne heofonan & eorðan
 God made in beginning heaven and earth
 "In the beginning, God made heaven and earth"
 (coaelhom,+AHom_1:70.47)
- c. finite verb in third position
 Se bisceop þæs **ðancode** mid blýðum mōde
 The bishop for-that gave-thanks with joyous spirit
 "The bishop gave thanks for that with a joyous spirit"
 (coaelive,+ALS_[Basil]:140.544)
- d. finite verb in fourth position
 Se Hælend þā him tō **clypode** sum gehwæde cild
 The Lord then him to summoned a small child
 "Then the Lord summoned a small child to him"
 (cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_34:470.138.6782)
- e. finite verb in final position
 Sume for hungre heora fēondum on hand **ēodon**
 Some for hunger their enemies in hand went
 "Some yielded to their enemies because of hunger"
 (cobede,Bede_1:12.54.2.493)

³ All examples are taken from the two corpora described in section 1.3, and use the referencing conventions of those corpora.

(2) Subordinate clauses

- a. finite verb in first position⁴
for ðan þe **ne bið** nān ðing Gode unāræfniendlic
because that NEG is no thing to-God impermissible
“... because nothing is impermissible to God”
(cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_13:283.59.2406)
- b. finite verb in second position
for þam ðe sēo mōder **ofslōh** ær þane fæder
because the mother killed before the father
“... because the mother killed the father before”
(coadrian,Ad:12.2.32)
- c. finite verb in third position
Gif hwylc ungesælig mann his scyppend **bið** ungehȳrsum
If any unfortunate man his creator is disobedient
“If any unfortunate man is disobedient to his creator ...”
(coaelive,+ALS[Forty_Soldiers]:279.2667)
- d. finite verb in fourth position
hū se mæra Abraham on mycelre costnunge Gode **wæs** getrȳwe
how the famous Abraham in much temptation to-God was
faithful
“... how the famous Abraham was faithful to God in much
temptation”
(coaelive,+ALS_[Maccabees]:251.4986)
- e. finite verb in final position
būton se abbod him gepafunge mid lēafe **syllē**
except the abbot him permission with leave gave
“... except the abbot gave him permission with leave”
(cobenrul,BenR:43.69.1.844)

In addition, Old English and the modern V2 languages differ in the behavior of subjects: in modern-language V2 clauses with a non-subject constituent in the initial topic position, the finite verb and the subject are inverted. In Old English, the subject generally inverts only if it is not a pronoun, as in (3); pronominal subjects appear in second position between the topic and the finite verb, as shown in (4).

⁴ The negative particle *ne* ‘not’ is a proclitic on the finite verb and therefore does not hold a structural position.

- (3) Ðis **sæde Crīst** be hym sylfum
This said Christ about him self
“Christ said this about himself ...”
(coaelhom,+AHom_26.1:14.3909)

- (4) Ðis **hēo cwæð** mid wōpe
This she said with weeping
“She said this with weeping”
(coelive,+ALS[Agatha]:22.2024)

There are, however, a few well-defined contexts in Old English in which pronominal subjects do invert: 1) direct questions, as in (5); 2) verb-initial declarative main clauses, where the verb is frequently negated or in subjunctive mood, as in (6); 3) main clauses with *þā/þonne* ‘then’ in initial position, as in (7); and 4) main clauses with other short adverbs in initial position, e.g. *swā* ‘so,’ *þus* ‘thus,’ *nū* ‘now,’ as in (8).

- (5) direct question:
hwī **behylst þū** mē swā, hālgā?
why look you me thus, holy-one?
“Why do you look at me like this, holy one?”
(coelive,+ALS_[Martin]:1186.6758)

- (6) verb-initial declarative:

- a. **næbbe gē** lif on ēow
NEG-have you life in you
“You do not have life in you ...”
(cocathom2,+ACHom_II_15:152.70.3364)
- b. **bē hē** ēower ealdor on ælcum gefeohte
be.subjunctive he your leader in each battle
“Let him be your leader in each battle”
(coelive,+ALS_[Maccabees]:266.5001)

- (7) clauses with *þā/þonne* ‘then’ in initial position

- a. **Þā ēodon hī** to healle
Then went they into hall
“Then they went into the hall”
(coelive,+ALS[Agnes]:377.1979)
- b. **þonne bið hē** Godes mann
then is he God’s man
“Then he is God’s man”
(coelive,+ALS[Ash_Wed]:138.2776)

- (8) clauses with short adverbs in initial position

Nū **sende ic** tō þē

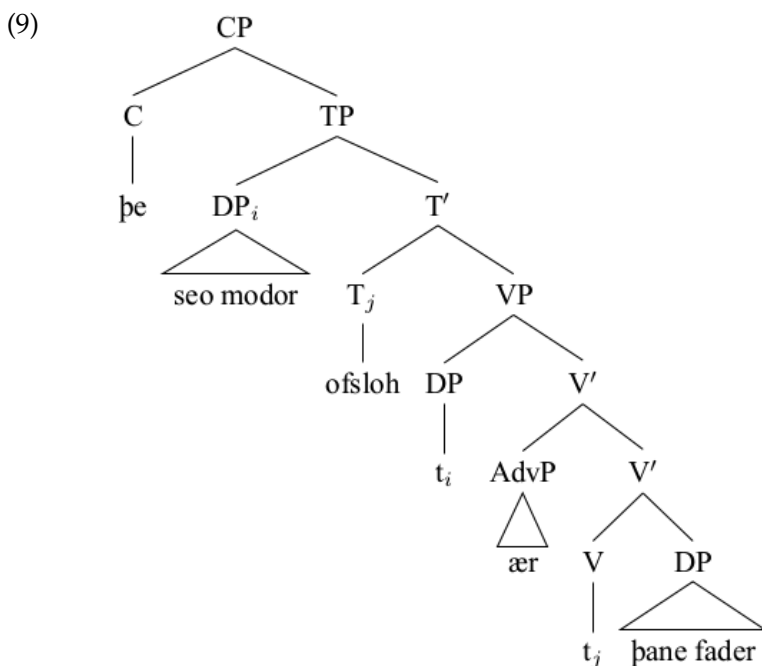
Now send I to you

“Now I send to you”

(coalive,+ALS[Peter’s_Chair]:143.2378)

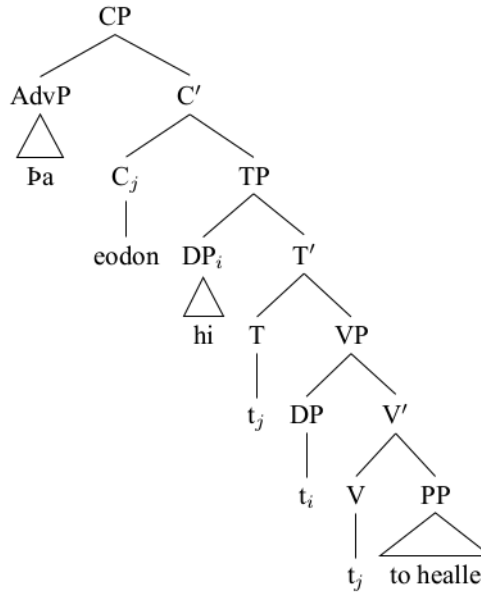
Most syntacticians analyze the position of the verb in (1) through (4) as derived by movement of the finite verb to a higher position in the clause structure labeled T (for tense), as shown in (9); in (5) through (8), the verb has moved even higher to C, as in (10).⁵ We will use the term V-to-C when we consider structures of the type in (10).

The position of the finite verb in part determines the order of finite auxiliary (e.g. modals, ‘be,’ ‘have’) and non-finite lexical verb: as shown in (11), in clauses with the auxiliary in final position, the lexical verb necessarily precedes the auxiliary; in clauses with the auxiliary in medial position, the lexical verb follows the auxiliary.



⁵ In these structures, the original (underlying) position of moved constituents is indicated by a trace (‘t’) coindexed with the constituent. Noun phrases have the label DP (‘determiner phrase’). All lexical material, including subjects, objects, adverbials, and verbs, are within the VP in underlying structure, and move to various landing sites.

(10)



(11) a. Se cyningc þa yrre **geworden wæs**
 The king then angry become was
 "The king then became angry"
 (cochristoph,LS_4_[Christoph]:11.9)

b. Ic **eom** sōðlice of cynelicum cynne **cumen**
 I am truly of noble rank come
 "I have truly come from a noble rank"
 (coapollo,ApT:4.8.41)

In contrast to Old English, Present-Day English main and subordinate clauses exhibit the following linear orders:

- The subject is generally in clause-initial position (the 'canonical' subject position), followed by the finite verb; the subject does not invert with the finite verb in declarative sentences, as shown by the translations of (1) through (4) and (6) through (8).⁶
- Verbs appear in clause-medial rather than clause-final position, and the finite auxiliary always precedes the non-finite lexical verb, as shown by the same translations.

⁶ There are, of course, several well-known exceptions to this generalization, e.g. declarative clauses with a negative constituent in initial position, as in (i); and verb-initial clauses with subjunctive verbs, as in (ii):

- (i) Never **have I** seen such a sight.
 (ii) **Were I** a rich man, I would end world hunger.

We assume that outside of the specific contexts in (5) through (8), the position of the finite verb in Old English is not regulated by the V2 constraint. On the other hand, a different diachronic generalization becomes apparent: in Old English, it is possible for the finite verb to be clause-final, i.e. in a position after all verbal complements and modifiers, but allowing prosodically heavy elements to appear to its right. The possibility of clause-final position for the verb disappears over time, eventually leading to modern English, which requires the finite verb to be in a clause-medial position preceding any complements and most adverbials.

1.1.2. THE ORDER OF VERBS AND THEIR COMPLEMENTS

Languages are frequently classified on the basis of the underlying order of verbs and their objects, either object-verb (OV) or verb-object (VO). This classification is independent of the V2 constraint discussed above: German, for example, is a V2 language with OV underlying order, while Swedish is a V2 language with VO order. Although the two features are independent, V2 masks the underlying order of verbs and their objects: the verb can move to the second position (indeed, it must do so unless it is embedded under an auxiliary verb); the object can also move to the clause-initial topicalization position. In addition, in Old English objects have the option to move leftward (scrambling) or rightward (postposition), again masking the underlying order. As shown in Pintzuk (2005), Pintzuk and Taylor (2006), and Taylor and Pintzuk (2015), scrambling and postposition in Old English are influenced by several factors, including the following:

- Object type: pronouns move more freely than, and may move to different positions from, nominal objects.
- Polarity: quantified objects, negative objects and non-quantified, non-negative objects ('positive objects') have different constraints on leftward and rightward movement.
- Length or heaviness: the longer and more prosodically heavier the object, the more likely it is to be postposed to a position after the verb.
- Information status: new and focused objects are more likely to appear in post-verbal position; given objects are more likely to appear pre-verbally.

Both verb-object and object-verb orders appear in both main and subordinate clauses in Old English, as shown in (12) and (13).

(12) object-verb

- a. Se bisceop **þæs ðancode** mid blýðum mōde
The bishop for-that gave-thanks with joyous spirit
"The bishop gave thanks for that with a joyous spirit"
(coaelive,+ALS_[Basil]:140.544)
- b. þæt hī him **wæstmas agēafon** gōdra weorca
so-that they him results gave good works
"... so that they gave him the results of good works"
(coaelhom,+AHom_3:89.461)

(13) verb-object

- a. Ic **secge ēow sōðfæstnysse**
I say to-you truth
"I tell you the truth"
(coaelhom,+AHom_7:44.1082)
- b. for þan þe hē **gehælp his folc**
because he saves his people
"... because he saves his people ..."
(coaelhom,+AHom_2:95.295)

This means that the relationship between underlying structure and surface order is not always one-to-one: the same surface order may be derived in more than one way. For example, the order subject-verb-object in (14a) is at least three ways ambiguous: underlying verb-object structure, as in (14b); underlying object-verb structure with leftward movement of the verb, as in (14c); and underlying object-verb structure with rightward movement of the object (postposition), as in (14d). In these examples, we show only those movements necessary to derive the linear constituent order; 't' is again the trace representing the original position of the moved constituent.

(14) a. he gehælp his folc

- b. DP-sbj [vp V DP-obj]
- c. DP-sbj V [vp DP-obj t]

- d. DP-sbj [vp t V] DP-obj


The fact that the example in (14) is structurally ambiguous does not prevent us from detecting a trend away from OV order towards VO over the course of Old English. There are two ways to detect the trend: one is to control for the influences on scrambling and postposing discussed above, making an ‘apples-to-apples’ comparison possible even when these processes apply at different rates in different texts. The second strategy is to investigate the position of two other types of verbal complements that, unlike objects, never move from their original position in the clause: particles, such as *ūp* ‘up,’ *adūn* ‘down,’ *ūt* ‘out,’ *in* ‘in’; and stranded prepositions, where the object of the preposition has moved from its original position within the prepositional phrase. These diagnostic elements can be used to determine the positions of verbs and objects within the clause: if the diagnostic is pre-verbal, as in (15a–b) and (16a–b), the verb is in final position in underlying structure; if the diagnostic is post-verbal, as in (15c–d) and (16c–d), the verb is in medial position.⁷

(15) particles

- a. his hūse of þām þe hē **ūt fērde**
his house from which that he out went
“... his house, from which he went out”
(coaelhom,+AHom_4:235.647)
- b. Isaias se wītega wæs **āwæg farande**
Isaiah the prophet was away going
“Isaiah the prophet was going away”
(coaelive,+ALS_[Book_of_Kings]:421.3959)
- c. oþþæt ... þæt hors hine **bær forð**
until ... the horse him carried forth
“... until ... the horse carried him forth”
(coaelive,+ALS[Ash_Wed]:50.2731)
- d. ær þām þe hī furðan mōston **feallan adūne**
before that that they even must fall down
“... before they must even fall down”
(coaelhom,+AHom_22:336.3476)

⁷ See Pintzuk 2005 and Pintzuk and Haeberli 2008 for evidence that particles and stranded prepositions can serve as diagnostics in this way. Two additional diagnostic elements, pronominal objects and negative objects, have other movement properties that make them unsuitable for use here.

(16) stranded prepositions

- a. Drihten him þā **tō cwæð**
Lord him then to said
“The Lord then said to him ...”
(coblick,LS_1.2_[AndrewMor[BiHom_19]]:235.133.3036)
- b. þā stōwe þe hē **on ālēd** wæs
the position which he on placed was
“... the position on which he was placed”
(conicodA,Nic_[A]:13.1.11.233)
- c. Ðā þā sēo burhwaru him **com tō**
When the burgess him came to
“When the burgess came to him ...”
(coaelhom,+AHom_5:92.743)
- d. nān man ne ðearf him **cweðan tō**
no man not needs him say to
“... no one needs to say to him ...”
(coprefgen,+AGenPref:105.72)

Modern English reaches the end of the trend away from OV orders mentioned above; it is categorically VO, as shown by the translations of (12), (15), and (16).

1.1.3. THE SCRAMBLING OF PRONOMINAL OBJECTS

Pronouns in Old English frequently move leftward from their original position adjacent to the lexical verb to a position at or near the left periphery of the clause. In the prose, their surface position differs in main and subordinate clauses: in main clauses, they occur between the topic in initial position and the finite verb, as shown in (17a); in subordinate clauses, they appear either immediately after the subordinator, as in (17b), or between the subject and the finite verb, as in (17c). In contrast, in *Beowulf* and other Old English poetry, scrambled pronouns normally appear in clause-initial position in both clause types, as shown in (18a–b).

- (17) a. Se hālga pāpa Gregorius **ūs** onwreah þā dīgelnysses þisre
rædinge
The holy pope Gregory us reveals the mystery of-this passage
“The holy pope Gregory reveals to us the mystery of this
passage”
(cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_23:366.29.4556)

- b. *ðā þā hī* God gesceōp
when them God created
“... when God created them”
(coaelive,+ALS_[Christmas]:30.22)
 - c. *þæt se lifigenda Godes Sunu hīe* hæfde gesōht
that the living God’s Son them had sought
“... that the living Son of God had sought them”
(coblick,HomU_18_[BlHom_1]:11.161.140)
- (18) a. *hīe* wyrd forswēop on Grendles gryre
them fate swept into Grendel’s terror
“fate swept them into Grendel’s terror”
(cobeowul,16.476.400)
- b. *ðær him* foldwegas fægere þūhton cystum cūðe
where them trails fair seemed excellence well-known
“... where the trails seemed fair to them, well-known for their
excellence”
(cobeowul,28.864.733)

Again, this movement was lost in this history of English, and pronominal objects in Modern English normally appear after the lexical verb, as shown by the translations of (17) and (18).

1.1.4. THE POSITION OF SUBJECTS

The position of subjects in Old English subordinate clauses is not fixed: subjects can appear in different positions, at least partly depending on the information status (Biberauer and van Kemenade 2011) and verb type, as shown in (19).

- (19) a. *þæt hyre wæron* forgyfene **manega synna**
that her were forgiven many sins
“... that many sins were forgiven her”
(coaelhom,+AHom_6:311.1022)
- b. *þæt him ne eglige æfre sum þing* hēr
that him NEG troubles ever some thing here
“... that something never troubles him here.”
(coaelhom,+AHom_8:164.1251)
 - c. *þæt him cuman sceolde, eallum þām folce ... flæscmættas genōge*
that to-them come should, all the people ... animal-flesh enough
“... that enough meat should come to them, to all the people ...”
(coaelhom,+AHom_21:89.3130)

In contrast, in Modern English subjects normally appear immediately after the complementizer and are immediately followed by the finite verb, as shown by the translations of (19); this has been called the ‘canonical’ subject position.

1.1.5. THE POSITION OF GENITIVE PHRASES WITHIN NOMINAL PHRASES

In early stages of English, genitive phrases within nominal phrases can appear either before or after the noun, as shown in (20a–b). In contrast, in Modern English the genitive with the ending ‘s’ (the Saxon genitive) can appear only before the noun, as shown by the translations of the clauses in (20).

- (20) a. **Þæt ðā hēafodmenn þæs folces** smēadon betwux him
That the chieftains of-the people deliberated between
themselves
“That the people’s chieftains deliberated among themselves ...”
(cocathom1,+ACHom_I,_14.1:291.29.2588)
- b. Wite gē ðætte **ðīoda kyningas** bīoð **ðæs folces waldendas**
Know you that nations’ kings are the people’s masters
“Know that nations’ kings are masters of the people”
(cocura,CP:17.119.25.807)

1.1.6. RELATIVE PRONOUNS

In early stages of English, there were two ways of introducing relative clauses: 1) the use of the invariant complementizer *þe*, ‘that’; 2) the use of a form of the demonstrative pronoun *sē* ‘the/that,’ with or without *þe*; examples are given in (21). Over time, the use of the demonstrative declines, with a corresponding increase in the use of an invariant complementizer.

- (21) a. Constantinus ... hāfde ænne heretogan **se** hātte Gallicanus
Constantine ... had a general who was-called Gallicanus
“Constantine ... had a general who was called Gallicanus”
(coaelhom,+AHom_23:51.3729)
- b. and ælc **seðe** innēode ārwurðode God for þām heofonlican
lēohte
and each who-that in-went honored God for the heavenly light
“and each who went in honored God for the heavenly light ...”
(coaelive,+ALS[Agnes]:160.1820)

- c. Hē cwæð tō þære byrig **þe** hātte Corozaim
He said to the city that was-called Corozaim
“He said to the city that was called Corozaim ...”
(coaelhom,+AHom_18:57.2534)

1.2. Syntactic variation and change in the history of English

Research during the past 25 years (Kroch 1989, Pintzuk and Taylor 2006, Santorini 1993, Sundquist 2003, Wallenberg 2009, Warner 2006, among many others) has established that many instances of syntactic change in the history of English and other languages occurred gradually over a long period of time: for example, variation in the position of subjects, verbs and objects can be seen throughout Old English and into the Middle English period, as shown in examples (1) through (19) above. Moreover, variation in word order is attested within the work of individual authors, with no difference in semantic or pragmatic interpretation – at least as far as modern readers are able to discern. Thus the variation cannot be attributed to variation within the community, with some Old English speakers categorically producing one constituent order, while other speakers categorically produce the alternate order. When the frequencies of competing orders are measured for each text, we often see a fairly steady chronological progression, with the new innovative order gradually increasing in frequency at the expense of the older conservative order, until the change from old to new reaches completion at the end of a long period of variation. This progression provides the basis for our method of dating the language of *Beowulf*, as will be discussed below in Section 3.

1.3. The database

We used as our database two morphosyntactically annotated corpora (known as ‘parsed’ corpora), which were created to enable searches on syntactic structure. For the poetry, we used the York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry (YCOEP, Pintzuk and Plug 2002), which contains 71,490 words of Old English poetic text from the Old English section of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts. Most of the longer texts are represented by samples from 4,000 to 7,000 words in length; however, the full text of *Beowulf* is included in the corpus. For Old English prose, we used the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE, Taylor et al. 2003), which contains 1.5 million words of Old English prose text. There are important advantages to using parsed corpora for syntactic research: 1) rare data are more easily found by searching a parsed corpus than by manually searching text; 2) with a parsed corpus, any number of possible hypotheses can be

explored very quickly and then either pursued or abandoned with little cost; 3) research results based on a publicly-available parsed corpus are verifiable and reproducible by other researchers; 4) for quantitative studies in historical syntax which seek to describe and explain variation and change over time and space, it is necessary to be able to track and compare frequencies of occurrence in different subsets of data; parsed corpora enable this to be done quickly and easily; 5) parsed corpora can reduce or eliminate the problems associated with both impressionistic studies and manually created corpora by increasing the speed and accuracy at which data collection can be done, which in turn increases the size of the database and makes the results more representative; and 6) finally, a parsed corpus is a permanent resource for the linguistic community which can be used time and again for any number of investigations. For the purposes of this study, advantage 4 is important, since our claims about the date of *Beowulf* are based on quantitative evidence.

2. Syntactic criteria for dating

We used the same criteria in our study as Zimmermann 2014, who assigned dates of composition to nineteen undated Old English prose texts. The eleven criteria listed below are in most cases syntactic in nature; that is, they represent variation in syntactic structure and/or syntactic processes that result in variation in surface word order. The Old English data for criteria one through seven were limited to clauses with subjects positioned before the finite verb; this eliminated the possibility that these clauses were derived by V-to-C movement. As discussed below, Zimmermann placed restrictions on the data that were used in order to reduce ambiguity or eliminate unproductive contexts; in most cases we adopted the restrictions, and in some cases added additional restrictions of our own.

1. **The position of the finite lexical verb** (Vfin1-main, Vfin1-sub). Clauses were classified as verb-final or verb-medial on the basis of the order of diagnostic elements (particles and stranded prepositions) with respect to the finite lexical verb: as discussed in section 1.1.2, if the diagnostic element precedes the lexical verb, the clause is necessarily finite-verb-final (the conservative order); if the diagnostic element follows the verb, the clause is finite-verb-medial (the innovative order). As shown in section 1.1.1, in Old English both main and subordinate clauses could be either finite-verb-final or finite-verb-medial; the frequencies were measured separately for the two clause types.

2. **The order of finite auxiliary and non-finite lexical verb** (Vfin2-sub). This criterion is the third measure of the position of the finite verb: if the non-finite lexical verb precedes the finite auxiliary, the clause is finite-verb-final; if the lexical verb follows the auxiliary, the clause is finite-verb-medial; see the discussion in section 1.1.1 with respect to the examples in (11). In most of the prose texts, the order lexical verb – auxiliary verb was rare in main clauses, so the frequency was measured only for subordinate clauses (which often, as in this case, lag behind a word order change which goes to completion earlier in main clauses).
3. **The position of nominal objects** (Vfin3-sub). This criterion, the fourth for the position of the finite verb, looks at the position of non-pronominal objects in subordinate clauses with finite lexical verbs. If the object precedes the verb, the clause is verb-final. If the object follows the verb, the clause is potentially verb-medial. Recall that this order is structurally ambiguous; see the discussion of the examples in (14). Our criterion is fundamentally a one-way implication: we can be sure that clauses with the object before the verb are verb-final; with the verb before the object, we cannot be certain that postposition of the object rightward has not applied. Nonetheless, these one-way implications do uncover clear diachronic trends, which our quantitative analysis can exploit.
4. **The position of the non-finite lexical verb** (Vnonfin1). Clauses are classified as either object-verb (the conservative order) or verb-object (the innovative order) based on the position of the non-finite lexical verb with respect to the same diagnostic elements (particles and stranded prepositions) that were used in Vfin1-main and Vfin1-sub above. Since the frequency of the relevant clauses is very low, main and subordinate clauses are grouped together.
5. **The order of non-finite lexical verbs and their objects** (Vnonfin2). This is the second criterion that measures the position of the non-finite lexical verb. If the object precedes the verb, the clause is classified as object-verb (the conservative order); if the object follows the verb, the clause is verb-object (the innovative order). As discussed above in section 1.1.2, scrambling and postposition in Old English are influenced by such factors as object type, heaviness, and information status. We followed Zimmermann 2014 and grouped main and subordinate clauses together. In order to minimize the role of object movement in deriving the surface constituent order, Zimmermann used only two-word nominal objects that were adjacent to the non-finite

verb.⁸ For our study, we further restricted the data to positive objects.

6. **The scrambling of pronominal objects** (Pro1-main, Pro1-sub). As discussed in section 1.1.3, if the pronominal object is adjacent to the subject (either before or after) and separated from the lexical verb, the object is scrambled (the conservative order). If the pronominal object is not adjacent to the subject and has remained close to the verb, the object is *in situ* (the innovative order). In both this diagnostic and Pro2 below, we are only considering scrambling which targets a position in the left periphery of the clause.⁹
7. **The scrambling of pronominal objects** (Pro2-main, Pro2-sub). Pro1 focuses on diagnosing pronominal object scrambling in clauses where the pronominal object has moved leftward away from the verb, across an intervening constituent, all the way to the position of pronominal subjects. Another strategy to diagnose scrambling involves looking at clauses which we can be relatively confident are verb-medial. In these clauses, the verb has moved leftward to T, as shown in (9). If a pronominal object has moved even further left, this movement must be due to scrambling; if it remains to the right of the verb it cannot have scrambled.
8. **The position of subjects** (Sbj-sub). This criterion measures the frequency of subjects in ‘canonical’ subject position in subordinate clauses, where canonical position is between the complementizer or subordinating conjunction and the finite verb, and adjacent to both, as in the translations of (19a–c). We permitted non-adjacency in clauses where pronominal objects had scrambled to a position either immediately before or after the subject, as in (17b–c).
9. **Movement of the finite verb to C** (ProInv-main). We measured the number of main declarative clauses where the verb inverts with a subject pronoun, as discussed in 1.1.1, by counting the number of verb – subject-pronoun and subject-pronoun – verb orders that occurred. We required the nominative pronoun to be adjacent to the verb, with the sole exception of intervening object pronouns that have undergone scrambling to a position between the subject and the verb.

⁸ Objects that are not adjacent to the non-finite verb have necessarily moved from their underlying adjacent position. Taylor and Pintzuk (2012: 57 [table 3.12]) found that nominal two-word objects in Old English were about as likely to appear pre-verbally as post-verbally; restricting objects to this length at least partly compensates for the effects of heaviness and information status.

⁹ Objects can move leftward but still remain within the verb phrase; we are not including this type of ‘short’ scrambling.

10. **The position of genitive phrases within noun phrases** (Gen). We measured the transition between the old and new ordering options for genitives, discussed in section 1.1.5, by counting noun phrases with either order.
11. **Relative clause introducers** (Rel). As discussed in section 1.1.6, Old English undergoes a change from using an inflected demonstrative of the *sē* ‘that’ family as a relative pronoun to the use of the invariant particle *þe*. A large number of relative clauses are also attested which combine both these strategies. We measured the transition to the innovative *þe* strategy by counting relative clauses which display that strategy alone and comparing the number to those which use *sē* (either by itself or in combination with *þe*).

3. Methods and results

3.1. Dating *Beowulf* using syntactic evidence

As far as we are aware, the methodology we use for dating the language of *Beowulf* was first used by Zimmermann 2014.¹⁰ First, we measure the frequency of the variants of each criterion (e.g. the position of the finite lexical verb, verb-final vs. verb-medial) in texts whose date of composition is known; second, we measure the same frequency in *Beowulf*; and finally, we determine where on the progression line for that criterion the *Beowulf* frequency falls.

To implement this methodology, we used CorpusSearch, the search engine developed to search parsed corpora,¹¹ to code, collect, and count the tokens needed to measure the criteria listed above, in the texts of the YCOE (Old English prose) and the YCOEP (Old English poetry). Our data, the CorpusSearch queries, and additional supplementary material, can be found in our Github repository at <https://github.com/uoy-linguistics/dating-beowulf-2015>. In order to successfully indicate a date of composition for *Beowulf*, we judged that a quantitative syntactic criterion must meet the following conditions:

1. The value of the criterion must show a coherent change over the Old English period in prose texts.

¹⁰ We are very grateful to Richard Zimmermann for helpful discussion of his methodology and results. Although our criteria are based on his, in some cases we defined them somewhat differently. The differences are discussed in our Github repository at <https://github.com/uoy-linguistics/dating-beowulf-2015>.

¹¹ CorpusSearch was created by Beth Randall and is now available as open source software from its Sourceforge project website (<http://corpussearch.sourceforge.net>).

2. There must be enough data in *Beowulf* to evaluate the criterion.
3. *Beowulf*'s value must fall within a plausible interval, based on the prose texts.
4. The criterion must not systematically differ between poetic and prose texts.

Vfin1-sub (criterion 1, the position of the finite lexical verb) and Sbj-sub (criterion 8, the position of subjects) were immediately excluded from our analysis because they violate condition 1: they do not show a temporal trend over the Old English period, either in our data or in Zimmermann's Old English data.¹² Vnonfin1 (criterion 4, the position of the non-finite lexical verb) and Vnonfin2 (criterion 5, the order of non-finite lexical verbs and their objects) were also excluded from our analysis for violating condition 2: the relevant contexts are so infrequent as to not appear in *Beowulf* at all. For the remaining criteria, our results and a comparison with Zimmermann's results are given in Figure 8.1. The figure includes the 52 texts which Zimmermann studied, as well as 67 prose texts from the YCOE which we coded.¹³ We have adopted Zimmermann's assignments of dates to the uncertain texts; a full list of texts we use and the dates assigned to them can be found in the Github repository accompanying this article.

Each subplot in Figure 8.1 contains the data for a single criterion, and includes two linear trend lines to fit to our dataset and Zimmermann's.¹⁴ For our own data, we included points only if they had more than five relevant tokens, in order to exclude obviously imprecise measurements; token counts for Zimmermann's data were not available, so all points were included. Finally, each subfigure

¹² Zimmermann included these features in his study because they do increase in the early ME period, the period for some of the texts in his corpus.

¹³ Our study of the YCOE includes more texts than Zimmermann's did for several reasons. Firstly, some texts in the YCOE (e.g. *Cura Pastoralis*) are split into a preface and a main text, each of which is contained in a separate file. Zimmermann combined these texts for his study; we did not. Secondly, Zimmermann split the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles into four sections of uneven temporal extent based on the periods in his dating study. We have split this text into eight sections, each spanning 25 years. Finally, there are some differences in which texts from the corpus are included. Most notably, Zimmermann split the *Leechbook* into two sections, and the charters in the files *codocu1* through *codocu4* into several sections, based on his dating of their constituent parts. Because we could not easily replicate these splits, we have omitted these texts from our sample.

¹⁴ Much research in historical syntax, following Bailey (1973), uses an S-shaped model for the progression of changes. This is often further specified to be the logistic model proposed by Kroch (1989). In the present context, the use of S-shaped curves for visualization provides little if any additional value beyond straight lines. This is due to the fact that for none of these changes do we observe the beginning or end stages of the change when the proportion of variants used asymptotically approaches 0 or 1 respectively. Thus, the S-shaped curves fit to the data deviate very little from a linear pattern. The use of a fully non-linear fitting technique, such as LOESS, does uncover fluctuations in the data which (interestingly) are repeated in both datasets. However, the exploration of these patterns is beyond the scope of the present paper, and we have therefore decided not to display them.

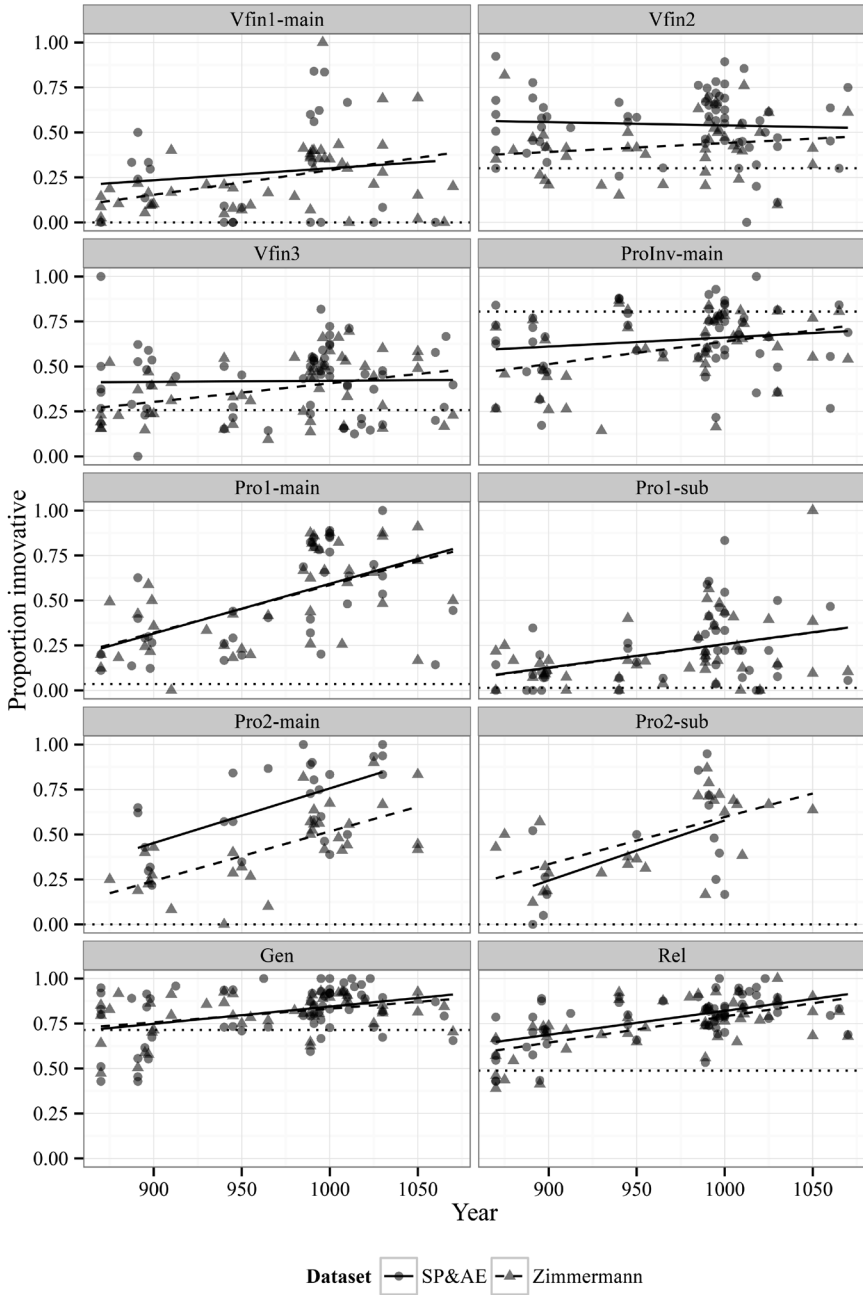


Figure 8.1: Linear trend lines for dating criteria

includes a dotted horizontal line, which gives the measurement of each criterion in *Beowulf*. Overall, the degree of similarity between our results for the prose texts and Zimmermann's is quite high, evidenced by the close match between the two linear trend lines. There are generally only small differences between the two sets of results, attributable to minor methodological differences between the two studies; and they do not affect the interpretation of the patterns in the data.

Criteria Vfin2 (criterion 2, the order of finite auxiliary and non-finite lexical verb) and Vfin3 (criterion 3, the position of nominal objects) were exceptions to the generalization that differences between the datasets were small. For both of these, Zimmermann found a clear trend, whereas we cannot replicate this finding: our data instead display a flat trajectory. This discrepancy remained even after several attempts to control for noise in the data, including the use of weighted regression to control for uneven sample sizes in different texts and the exclusion of texts which appear only in our dataset and not Zimmermann's. This latter group includes texts whose date of composition can be fixed only approximately, as well as the legal texts in the YCOE (filenames beginning colaw*), whose stylistic uniformity with the rest of the corpus might be questioned. The persistent nature of the discrepancy between our data and Zimmermann's indicates that they must be examined in greater detail, and we therefore leave them aside in our search for syntactic evidence of the date of composition of *Beowulf*.

Returning to the other criteria for which our data and Zimmermann's match, the most salient ones are those which violate condition 3: the value we find for *Beowulf* lies outside the variation sketched by the prose texts. The object pronoun scrambling criteria Pro1 and Pro2 (criteria 6 and 7, each with -main and -sub variants) are one example of the violation of condition 3. In the prose, for three of the four, the frequency increases from about 25% *in situ* to 75% *in situ* over the Old English period. Pro1-sub is an exception; the frequency increases from near 0% to 30%. In contrast, pronominal objects in *Beowulf* are virtually never *in situ*. Thus *Beowulf* looks much more archaizing than even the earliest prose texts. The ProInv pronoun-subject inversion criterion (criterion 9, movement of the finite verb to C) presents a similar though reversed situation. Prose texts go from about 50% non-movement to C of finite verbs in main clauses with pronominal subjects to about 75% non-movement to C; in other words, these clauses show about 50% inversion of the finite verb and the pronominal subject in the earliest texts, about 25% in the later texts. However, *Beowulf* has only 20% inversion (80% non-inversion). Here *Beowulf* looks more innovative than the latest prose texts. In section 3.2 below, we argue that these criteria actually violate condition 4 as well: their behavior in poetry and prose is systematically different.

The remaining three criteria fulfill our four conditions for syntactic dating, and thus can be used to date the language of *Beowulf*:

- Vfin1-main (criterion 1, the position of the finite lexical verb). This diagnostic increases from about 10% to 30% verb-medial for prose texts over the course of the Old English period. *Beowulf* has no finite-verb-medial sentences.
- Gen (criterion 10, the position of genitive phrases). In the prose, there is an increase from 75% to 95% pre-nominal genitives over the Old English period. *Beowulf* has just under 75% pre-nominal genitives.
- Rel (criterion 11, relative clause introducers). There is an increase from 60% use of invariant *þe* as a relativizer to 90% over the period. *Beowulf* has just under 50%.

These criteria paint a consistent picture of the date of composition of *Beowulf* as somewhat earlier than the earliest prose texts. This is in line with a growing consensus among scholars (Cronan 2004, Fulk 1992, Lapidge 2000, Newton 1993, Wormald 2006, among many others) that non-syntactic evidence also points to an early date for the poem.¹⁵

3.2 Systematic differences between the poetry and the prose

As previously mentioned, the pronoun-related criteria Pro1, Pro2, and ProInv all differ noticeably between *Beowulf* and the prose texts. In order to investigate the hypothesis that these differences could be due to systematic syntactic differences between prose and poetry, we examined the poetic texts of the YCOEP, using sixteen poems which have been reliably dated, at least to within a reasonable time span of the Old English period.¹⁶ We coded these poems for the five pronoun-related criteria. The results are given in Table 8.1.

There is relatively little data, but a few tentative conclusions can nonetheless be drawn. For Pro1-main and both Pro2-main and Pro2-sub, the frequency for the earliest prose texts is estimated by the linear trend line to have a value of about 25%. We see that virtually all poems fall under this threshold, many by substantial margins. In texts with more than five tokens, the only exception is *Riddles* for Pro2-main. Pro1-sub has noticeably lower values in the earliest prose, with the linear trend estimate near 10%. Only two poems appear above this threshold: *Phoenix* and *Christ I*. It is possible that prosodic factors and metrical

¹⁵ Returning to the ill-fated Vfin2 and Vfin3 criteria, which were discarded because our data failed to replicate Zimmermann's study, it is noteworthy that these too fit the same pattern. Questions about the accuracy of the prose data certainly exist, but it is striking that the data we have, imperfect as it is, fall in line with the more reliable criteria.

¹⁶ We used Cable's chronology (Cable 1981:80) updated by Fulk 1992.

Table 8.1: Frequencies for pronoun-related criteria in the poetic texts

<i>Text</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Pro1-main</i>	<i>Pro1-sub</i>	<i>Pro2-main</i>	<i>Pro2-sub</i>	<i>ProInv</i>
Cædmon's Hymn	657–80	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
Bede's Death Song	735	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
The Leiden Riddle	8th century	0/3 = 0%	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/2 = 0%
Christ III	7th–8th century	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/2 = 100%
Genesis A (I and II)	8th century	1/30 = 3.3%	0/2 = 0%	1/3 = 33%	0/0	13/25 = 52%
Riddles	8th century	2/20 = 10%	0/18 = 0%	2/7 = 29%	0/1 = 0%	68/80 = 85%
Exodus	8th–9th century	0/9 = 0%	0/6 = 0%	0/0	0/0	8/15 = 53%
Elene	9th century	3/32 = 9.4%	0/20 = 0%	2/11 = 18.2%	0/3 = 0%	28/42 = 67%
Fates of the Apostoles	9th century	0/0	0/1 = 0%	0/0	0/0	1/3 = 33%
Juliana	9th century	2/28 = 7.1%	0/21 = 0%	0/9 = 0%	0/2 = 0%	20/36 = 56%
Phoenix	post-Cynwulf	1/8 = 12.5%	1/8 = 12.5%	1/3 = 33%	0/1 = 0%	3/6 = 50%
Christ II	9th century	1/5 = 20%	0/6 = 0%	1/1 = 100%	0/2 = 0%	3/9 = 33%
Andreas	9th century	0/19 = 0%	0/16 = 0%	0/6 = 0%	0/2 = 0%	17/39 = 44%
Meters of Boethius	897	1/7 = 15%	2/29 = 6.9%	0/2 = 0%	0/1 = 0%	28/45 = 62%
The Battle of Brunanburh	937	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	1/1 = 100%
Christ I	late 8th–mid-10th century	0/8 = 0%	2/14 = 14%	0/3 = 0%	0/1 = 0%	8/9 = 89%

constraints are playing a role in the placement of pronouns, which are exceptionally light elements that never receive stress in Old English poetry. But we demonstrated in section 1.1.3 above that in subordinate clauses, the position of scrambled pronouns was different in the poetry and the prose; this points to the possibility of a difference in syntax. In any case, it is clear that the poetry differs from the prose in a systematic way, and that the unusually low (virtually non-existent) number of pronouns appearing *in situ* in *Beowulf* is not evidence to posit an early date of composition, since this feature is shared by most of the poems in our sample, including those for which a later date is secure.

For ProInv, the highest value of the linear trend at the end of the Old English period is just under 75%. *Beowulf* exceeds this threshold, as do *Riddles* and *Christ I*. Most other poems fall in the 50–65% range, with no clear diachronic trend. Again, the unusual position of *Beowulf* with respect to the prose texts should not serve as evidence to posit a late date for the poem. Here it is likely that *genre* effects are at play. Subject pronoun inversion plays a discourse-linking role in Old English, which can serve to link anaphora to their antecedents as suggested by Trips and Fuss (2009). Thus, in narrative texts we expect to see more inversion as a strategy to establish referential and temporal continuity across the text. This is likely to play less of a role in non-narrative *genres*, such as letters and laws, both of which are included in the prose corpus. The different levels of ProInv in different poetic texts points to an area of future research into the intersection between the syntax-information structure interface, language change (the loss of pronoun subject inversion), and *genre*. For the purposes of dating *Beowulf* on the ProInv criterion, however, we can merely say that we see *Beowulf* falling into the quantitative but diachronically unstructured region of variation in Old English poetry, a picture which did not emerge clearly when considering only prose.

Conclusion

In this paper we have described and implemented the conditions needed for using syntactic evidence to assign dates to historical texts. Old English is a stage of linguistic history in which many of the stark differences between English and its Germanic relatives are in the process of emerging. It therefore provides a fertile ground for the discovery and quantitative measurement of word order changes that reflect structural changes. Individual changes provide a poor basis for positing the date of composition of a text, as has been previously argued (Neidorf 2014: 12; Fulk 2014: 28). However, by building on previous work by Zimmermann (2014), we have shown that it is possible to overcome uncertainty by having recourse to a large battery of

precisely quantifiable dating criteria. In doing so, some of our tests are disqualified by the limited amount of data available or by (suspected) differences between poetic text and prose. Nonetheless, the texts contain sufficient evidence to approach the dating problem, and we conclude that the syntax of *Beowulf* is that of a very early Old English text – a conclusion that supports our hypothesis and that is coherent with evidence from other sources.

In gathering and analyzing this evidence, we are crucially aided by the parsed corpus methodology, which puts the identification and quantification of intricate syntactic patterns within reach even over a relatively large corpus. Furthermore, it allows the quantitative analysis to be kept perfectly consistent between texts, and even between corpora. It also allows the methods and results to be shared, as we have done through the use of distributed version control.

Ultimately, our results point towards several optimistic waypoints for the future of inquiry into the syntax and philology of Old English. First of all, it will be possible to investigate additional dating criteria to enhance our confidence in the results achieved – for *Beowulf* and also for other undated Old English texts. Our criteria address different areas of syntax, although they focus mainly on clause-level word order phenomena. Investigation of syntactic changes in other domains – e.g. in the syntax of noun phrases, going beyond the Gen criterion discussed above – will lend further richness to analyses of this type. Second, we have uncovered some possible systematic differences between the syntax of Old English poetry and prose. We believe that deeper investigation of Old English poetry other than *Beowulf* will allow us to answer broader questions about the syntax and stylistics of the Old English poetic texts, and their relationship to prose. This analysis will indubitably include the elaboration of a more complete parsed corpus of Old English poetry, which has already proven to be such a useful tool for us. Finally, we hope to have demonstrated that through the application of quantitative corpus analysis, traditional problems may be addressed in refreshing ways, ultimately contributing new answers to the ever-resurgent questions about the earliest history of the English language.

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The Anglo-Saxons and *Superbia*: Finding a Word for it

George Clark

Hans Schabram's examination (1965) of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary finds forty-one separate words in all parts of speech answering to *superbia*, *superbus*, *superbe*, and *superbire*. The rules for inclusion in this thesaurus specify that a word stand as a gloss for one of the *superbia* family or as an equivalent in an Anglo-Saxon translation of a Latin text. However, rare words belonging to one of the four Anglo-Saxon families of *superbia* terms join the thesaurus without meeting those strict criteria. Anglo-Saxon glossators and translators saw in their source texts *superbia* words with a strictly restricted meaning and had a native vocabulary that included no matching words with equally restricted fields of meaning. In classical Latin, *superbia* in a bad sense (I) means "loftiness, haughtiness, pride, arrogance" and in a good sense (II) "lofty spirit, honourable pride" and similarly *superbus* means both "haughty, proud, arrogant, insolent ..." (I) and "proud, superior, excellent, distinguished ..." (Lewis and Short 1879). Anglo-Saxon clerics understood *superbia* as a cardinal or deadly sin, not as an ambiguous term with meanings ranging from sense I to sense II. The apparent semantic precision of the *superbia* word family in the Latin they glossed or translated seems to have tested the learned in Anglo-Saxon England.

When learned Anglo-Saxons met one of the *superbia* family in a text they were translating or glossing (or simply reading), they presumably formed an idea of "pride" in attitudes and actions consistent with their cultural backgrounds. An Anglo-Saxon rendering of *superbia* at the highest level represents pride as denying and rebelling against the ultimate rightful authority. In *Genesis B* (Krapp 1931), the rebel angel's soliloquy (278–91) creates an Anglo-Saxon *locus classicus* for *superbia*, the ultimate manifesto of pride as the chief of the cardinal sins. The rebel angel rejects God's *hylde* (282b "grace, favor," that is a lord's loyalty toward a follower or "loyalty down") but insists his followers are *hold* (288a "true, faithful" that is loyal to him as their lord or "loyalty up"). The first of the angels proclaims "ic mæg wesan god swā hē" (283b, "I can be god / a god as well as he") and closes his meditation "Ne wille ic leng his geongra wurpan" (291b, "I will

no longer be his follower").¹ The case of the rebel angel reifies *superbia* as a deliberate violation of the great principle of subordination as Dr Johnston put it. The counsellor in Ælfric's *Colloquy* (Garmonsway 1947: 41–2) urges acceptance of that great principle in homelier terms: "Swā hwæðer þū sý, swā mæsseprēst, swā munuc, swā ceorl, swā kempa, begā oþþe behwyrf þē sylfne on þisum, 7 bēo þæt þū eart; forþām micel hȳnð 7 sceamu hyt is menn nellan wesan þæt þæt hē ys 7 þæt hē wesan sceal" ("whatever you are, whether ordained priest, or monk, or peasant, or warrior, practise or exercise yourself in this, and be what you are, because it is a shameful loss for a man not to want to be what he is and what he has to be"). The rebel angel in *Genesis B* (not named there) was not content to be what he was and had to be. In more general terms, a deliberate attempt to violate the one's rightful place in the natural order constitutes a form of *superbia* as Anglo-Saxons conceived it.

Schabram's forty-one distinct Anglo-Saxon equivalents for members of the *superbia* family are based on two native roots (*mōd* and *hygd*) and an Old French loanword (*prūt* / *prūd*). The thesaurus of pride (13–15) includes four word families: *oferhygd*-, *ofermōd*-, *mōdig*-, and *prūt*- that, with mutations, prefixes, and suffixes, make up this diverse host of terms for the first (sometimes) or chief or queen of the seven deadly, mortal, or cardinal sins. Schabram (1965: 129–30) outlined the historical and geographical diffusion (*Verbreitung*) of the vocabulary for *superbia* decisively: in Anglian texts, the *oferhygd*- family dominated throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, in Southern texts *ofermōd*-, the early choice, gradually yielded primacy to *mōdig*- from the mid-tenth to the eleventh century, but survived in a diminished role. In the twelfth century and thereafter, the descendants of Old French *prūt*-felled their native competitors.

In a culture that valued physical courage and daring and inculcated the pursuit of honor and avoidance of shame, the need to choose a native word to designate the first of the cardinal sins, *superbia* or 'pride' posed a problem, or a shock. That forty-one candidates vied for this office indicates learned indecision or uncertainty about electing one. Anglia made an early choice and kept to it for the whole Anglo-Saxon age, but in the south, the search for a word that would fit the Latin mold found multiple solutions perhaps because none of them meant what the learned saw in *superbia*. Anglo-Saxon society, however, valued order and a hierarchical system idealizing the relationship between the lord and follower as nicely illustrated by the self-descriptions of the Shepherd and Hunter in Ælfric's *Colloquy* (Garmonsway 1947: 22, 25–6). The shepherd briefly concludes an account of his work

¹ The translations of *Beowulf* follow Fulk 2010; the others are mine. Hooked 'e' is 'æ,' the abbreviation for Latin *vel* silently expanded, and the Tironian nota retained.

remarking “7 ic eom getrywe hlāforde mīnon” (“... and I am faithful to my lord”). The usually laconic hunter explains that he gives all his game to the king and on being asked what the king gives him replies “He scrȳt mē wel 7 fēt 7 hwīlon sylþ me hors oþþe bēah, þæt ic þe lustlicor cræft mīnne ic begançe” (“He clothes and feeds me well and sometimes gives me a horse or ring, so that I will more keenly exercise my craft”).

The table of Anglo-Saxon glosses to *superbia* in the twelve surviving glossed psalters at the end of Schabram’s book has the psalters left to right in chronological order, the Latin forms of *superbia* at the far left running down the page in the order of their appearances (by verse and line) with the Anglo-Saxon glosses running across the page parallel to their lemmata on the far left from the earliest to the latest glossed psalter. The graphic layout illustrates the strength of Schabram’s basic contention and hints at its potential, minor, flaws. The early northern Vespasian (875–900) and Junius (ca. 925) psalters have only *oferhygd*-words, Regius (ca. 950), an early southern psalter, has only *ofermōd*-, as does the incomplete Bosworth (975–1000) psalter. The Lambeth (ca. 1025) has *ofermōd*-, *mōdig*-, and, in a triple gloss, *ofermætta vel prūtscipe vel mōdignysse*, the only example of *prūt*- in the psalters. Like the poets, the later glossators, excepting the promiscuous Lambeth, exclude Schabram’s late southern *mōdig*- family, weakening his chronological hypothesis. The Vitellius (ca. 1050) has a double gloss, *ofermōdnes vel oferhygd*, enlisting the northern choice and Schabram’s older southern form, again suggesting his historical theory may be expressed too rigorously. The youngest psalter, the Eadwine (ca. 1150), has much the same double gloss, *ofermōdnesse vel oferhȳdo*, and has both *oferhygd*- and *ofermōd*- forms throughout, but no examples of *mōdig*- or *prūt*-. The Arundel Psalter (1050–75), a Gallican psalter with gloss taken from an earlier Roman type psalter (Oess 17, 18–23), has *oferhygd*- forms from 9.23 to 73.23 with one exceptional *ofermōdnessa* at 58.13 and thereafter *ofermōd*- forms, but again, no *mōdig*- or *prūt*- forms. The glossed psalters offer little support to Schabram’s claim that *mōdig*- dominated the late Anglo-Saxon period,² but bolster his argument (1965: 130) that common Anglo-Saxon did not have a word group corresponding to the meaning Latinate writers saw in *superbia*, which stands and deserves reflection.

In sum, the three earliest glossed psalters hew close to Schabram’s geographical distribution, but the later nine all include Anglian and

² In a later study (1973), Schabram noted fifteen more examples of the Anglo-Saxon *superbia* vocabulary in texts not available to him in before 1965. The new data conformed to his dialectal thesis, but he recognized that two instances of the *ofermōd* group appeared in a MS (Cambridge, University Library, li. 1. 33) of the late twelfth century (1973: 277). He noted that the date of the MS was uncertain, but its scribe felt no need to replace the supposedly archaic word.

southern forms; the double glosses and the triple gloss strengthen the impression that writers north and south recognized that *superbia* had found a number of renderings in the vernacular. These glosses represent the linguistic choices of clerics learned in Latin and with some knowledge of the idea of seven cardinal sins, not popular speech or everyday ethics. Agreement among various glosses arises in part from borrowings among them rather than a consistent conception of *superbia* and a uniform practice in translation. The Salisbury Psalter gloss follows a text of the type preserved in the much earlier Regius Psalter gloss (Sisam and Sisam 1959: 39–45) and all glosses later than Regius, except for Cambridge, depend at least in part on a gloss of the Regius type (Sisam and Sisam 1959: 56); Rosier (1962: xxxii–xxxv) argued for a direct connection between the Arundel and Vitellius Psalters and asserted that the Spelman, Vitellius, Tiberius, and Arundel Psalters originated in the same place, “possibly Winchester.” In sum, the twelve glossed psalters give us fewer than a dozen independent witnesses and represent learned conventions developed in a written tradition probably much influenced by a few learned and influential clerics.

Since the common Anglo-Saxon language did not have a single specific word (or perhaps word-family) that mapped onto the Christian concept of *superbia*, writers in different places at various times adopted words in their native dialects to designate, or approximate, that concept. The Anglo-Saxons’ search for the right words to render the *superbia* family led to borrowing Old French *prūt-* / *prūd-*, perhaps the only French word (word group) taken into English before the Norman conquest (Campbell 1959: §567). The Old French loan promised to meet a need still felt even though a host of native words had rendered *superbia*. Schabram further argues that the same dialectal distribution of *superbia* terms (*oferhygd-* in Anglian and *ofermōd-* in the south) in prose and poetry poses a challenge to the widely accepted idea that the language of Anglo-Saxon poetry comes from a supra-dialectal *koiné* (1965: 129). If common Anglo-Saxon lacked a word for *superbia*, so would the language of traditional poetry. That linguistic problem would require that an ancient art find new, and therefore probably diverse, solutions.

A dialect posits a community of speakers whose shared linguistic usages set them off from other communities of speakers. The preferred translations of the *superbia* family of words Schabram examines arose, not in villages, but in the scriptoria that produced glossed psalters and volumes of homilies and other works for the education of Christians and reflect the choices of writers who could read Latin and held some authority in the clerical world. If in the eleventh century *mōdig-* displaced the formerly dominant *ofermōd-* in the southern dialects, as Schabram maintains, the powerful influence of one writer, Ælfric, drove that process. Poems composed on Christian or biblical topics, those attributed to “Cædmon,” Cynewulf’s works and some

others (Schabram 1965: 124), could fill the lexical gap by adopting a choice reached by a clerical elite, but could hardly accept the foreign loan, *prūt-*; Schabram noted that much Anglo-Saxon poetry predates the borrowing of *prūt-* and that the poetic tradition's conservatism (1965: 123) would not welcome a foreigner. Grein's *Sprachschatz* runs to 855 pages, but the letter 'p' needs only one and a fraction (1912: 539–40) with about a score of headwords. An alliterative tradition will hardly welcome such a misfit. The poet of *Maldon* located the battle at the shore of the Pante that he named only once and alliterated with *prasse*, a unique word of uncertain meaning. For poets, pride (*prūt-*) was not an option. If poets composing on Christian and biblical themes found their *superbia* vocabulary in religious institutions, the North–South division of *oferhygd-* and *ofermōd-* would have little bearing on the question of a traditional poetic *koine*.

The search for an Anglo-Saxon word to render *superbia* presumably began with the learned writers who translated or glossed Christian Latin texts and in the north where Christian scholarship and poetry had their first flowerings. Early poets composing on Christian topics probably first found their rendering for *superbia* in those northern religious institutions. Abbeß Hild's institution gladly accepted the miraculous gift of a Christian poet and learned members of that institution coached Caedmon on biblical narrative (Bede: 4.24). Other religious institutions may have offered positions to traditional poets – not always for deeply religious purposes as Alcuin's rhetorically polished and highly persuasive letter to Bishop "Speratus" testifies (Bullough 1993: 102–3, 124). The poems *Deor* and *Widsith* attest to the traditional poet's search for a patron, a role a high-ranking cleric could fill. Though Caedmon's other poems have not survived, later poets, apparently also Anglian, followed his example in composing Christian poems in traditional verse. Bede's list of Caedmon's works, or the works themselves, could have inspired the poems of the *Junius Manuscript* and even of Cynewulf (Bede 4.24, Krapp 1931: ix).

Schabram (1965: 124) finds Anglo-Saxon renderings for the *superbia* family in fourteen surviving Anglo-Saxon poems; eleven of these have their origin in Anglia though most of them survive only in late, southern MSS and three originated and were copied in the south. In the poetic record of *superbia*, Schabram sees a strict division of Anglian *oferhygd-* and southern *ofermōd-*. Fulk (1992: §365) rightly observes "there are some objections to this pattern, as words of the Southern type are found four times in supposedly Anglian verse So, too, *oferhygd* is found once in *Genesis B* (328a)" Schabram explains that the Old Saxon *Heliand* consistently has *obarmōd* and *obarmōdig* as adjectives, but *obarhugd* as a noun. Hence, at line 328a, the translator turned a conjectured Old Saxon noun, *obarhugd*, into its Anglo-Saxon equivalent *oferhygd*. Schabram's explanation (1965: 128) for the appearance of

oferhygd in line 328 implies in line 272 the translator, seeing (the conjectured) *obarhugd* in his lost Old Saxon original, should have rendered it as *oferhygd* but instead wrote “Feala worda ... ofermodes” (Krapp 1931, 271b–272a “many words of pride ...”). Moreover, the poets of the *Heliand* and the Old Saxon *Genesis* may not have agreed on the correct noun for pride. Schabram (1965: 126) regards appearances of *ofermōd*- in poems of Anglian origin as substitutions for *oferhygd*-, but in those poems, southern copyists usually let *oferhygd*- forms stand. Fulk rightly concludes (1992: §365) that “it is surely too absolute to insist that one or the other form [of *ofermōd* and *oferhygd*] could not have been used outside its normal dialect range.”

In the *Regula Chrodegani* and in the *Regius-Psalter* (both southern texts), the glosses *oferhygdlice* and *oferhygd* to the respective lemmata, *contemptus* (adjective) and *contempus* (noun), have a negative meaning, but perhaps not exactly *superbia*, hence Schabram (1965: 113) argues these usages do not violate the boundaries of a northern *oferhygd*- and southern *ofermōd*-. In the Anglo-Saxon or Alfredian translation of Boethius (Sedgefield 1899: 62, 14–16), Wisdom asks Boethius “Gif þū nū gesāwe sumne swīðe wīsne man þe hafde swīðe gooda oferhȳda ... ?” (“if you saw a certain very wise man who had a very good *oferhȳda* ...”). Schabram (1965: 39) rightly observes that in this context *oferhygd* designates a “hoher Mut, edler Stolz, highmindedness, magnanimitas” (“high courage, noble pride, ... greatness of spirit”). The petitioner in Alfred’s translation of Augustine’s soliloquies asks “... and gedō mē unmōdigne. Sile mē ofereda ...” (“... make me humble. And grant me *ofereda* ...” (Carnicelli 1969: 56)) which Schabram (1965: 40) renders “nicht ‘Hochmut,’ sondern ‘hoher Mut’” – not pride but high courage/spirit and Carnicelli glosses as “honorable pride, magnanimity.” If in the south, *oferhygd*- could designate either a moral failing rather like *superbia* or a positive quality like “greatness of spirit,” *oferhygd*- in Anglia might also, in the common language or in traditional poetry, have had meanings not quite like *superbia*.

The *oferhygd*-group (Schabram 1965: 13–14) consists of ten separate words (counting the outlier *oferhoga*), but only *oferhygd* and *oferhȳdig* appear with any frequency. That the oldest word-family answering to *superbia* should prove to be tightly disciplined rather than diffuse suggests a rather small and well-connected group of learned persons determined this linguistic choice. The word, however, had its own life in common Anglo-Saxon and meanings not quite and even not at all like *superbia*. The two appearances of *oferhygd* in *Beowulf* clearly designate a social or moral failing that does not exactly match *superbia*. Hrothgar’s address to Beowulf moves from the historical example of Heremod whose *oferhygd* led to his ruin and thence to a paradigmatic narrative of a nobleman whose *oferhygd* results in his fall from grace. Hrothgar’s speech ends with fatherly and wise advice from the old king to the

young hero. That advice reminds Beowulf he should avoid *oferhygd* since life is short, decline and death certain. In dramatic terms, Hrothgar needs to give Beowulf wise advice since the day before, the hero had to remind Hrothgar, distraught at the death of his most-loved follower, that revenge better becomes a warrior than much mourning and that fame won in this life best becomes the dead:

Ne sorga, snotor guma. Sēlre bið æghwæm
 þæt hē his frēond wrece þonne hē fela murne.
 Ūre æghwylc sceal ende gebīdan
 worolde lifes; wyrce sē þe mōte
 dōmes ær dēaþe; þæt bið drihtguman
 unlifgendum æfter sēlest. (1384–9)

Do not grieve, wise warrior. It is better for each that he avenge his friend than that he lament much. Each of us shall face the end of life in this world; let him achieve glory who is permitted before his death; for a warrior no longer living that will be best afterward.

The role-reversal in which a young hero gives widely accepted and socially approved counsel to a wise old king affirms those universally acknowledged truths with a touch of ironic humor.

The motif set by “wyrce ... dōmes” runs through the mutual exchange of accepted wisdom. Hrothgar’s address reasserts the old king’s wisdom and dignity all the more as the essence of his speech restates the poem’s oft-stressed value system. As Hrothgar moves from a painful episode in Danish history to a less troubling parable and finally to Beowulf’s future, the motif of *oferhygd* and *dōm* recurs, those repeated words recall the poem’s opening statement on princely conduct. In this sequence and some 400 lines later, the poem makes *dōm* and its pursuit characterize Beowulf’s career. In *Beowulf*, a correct understanding of the social value system and the mindfulness to enact those values becomes the antithesis and antidote to *oferhygd*. Fortunately, Anglo-Saxon has a word, indeed a word family, for this mindfulness: *foreþanc*, *foreþancol*, *foreþanclice*, and *foreþancolness* (BT). This word family aims at the ability to visualize futures that might be variously experienced as *lēof* or *lāð* (1061a, ‘pleasing’ or ‘painful’), a prudent and thoughtful mental practice that protects one from *oferhygd* (Ringler 1966: 63–4). The petitioner in Alfred’s version of St Augustine’s soliloquies (Carnicelli 1969: 56) requests that God “... dō mē gesceadwīsne, and rihtwīsne, and foreþancfulne ...” (“... make me judicious, righteous, and forethoughtful / mindful”). The prefix to *oferhygd* roughly parallels that of *oferhīran* ‘not to hear, to disregard, disobey’ and *oferhīrness* ‘disobedience, disregard, neglect, contempt’ (BT). Modern English ‘overlook’ (not to notice, miss something) and ‘oversight’ (a lapse in attention) illustrate a like sense of “over-.”

A triple gloss, ‘thoughtlessness / heedlessness / recklessness’ might catch the meaning of *oferhygd* in *Beowulf*, but ‘lack of mindfulness’ might refresh the core sense of those familiar terms.

As Hrothgar rewards Beowulf’s followers and pays compensation for the one Grendel killed, the poem implicitly contrasts Beowulf’s *andgit* and *foreþanc* (1059a, 1060a, understanding and forethought) with Grendel’s lack of those qualities:

Forþan bið andgit æghwær sēlest,
ferhðes foreþanc: fela sceal gebīdan
lēofes ond lāpes sē þe longe hēr
on þyssum windagum worolde brūceð. (1059–62)

Therefore understanding is best in all circumstances, forethought of heart: anyone who enjoys this world for long in these days of struggle has to experience much that is to be liked and disliked.

Hrothgar’s accounts of the historical Heremod and hypothetical nobleman enact in narratives the meanings of *angit* and *foreþanc*. To prosper, rulers must know and practice the rules of generosity and kindness to their followers despite the impulses to forget or overlook those obligations in favor of the apparent demands of the moment.

Heremod’s bloody history – the killing of his followers – culminates in his failure of generosity – “nallas bēagas geaf / Denum æfter dōme” (1719b–20a, [he] “by no means gave rings to the Danes for their glory”) and thence to his dire, but obscurely indicated, fate. So too, the fortunate noble of Hrothgar’s parable falls victim to an accursed spirit who inspires him to feel his wealth insufficient:

pinceð him tō lȳtel þæt hē lange hēold,
gȳtsað gromhȳdig, nallas on gylp seleð
fætte bēagas ... (1748–50a).

... what he has held for long seems too little to him; bitter-minded, he is miserly, by no means gives plated rings with pomp ...

The miser dies, leaving no fame behind him, and his successor spends the hoarded wealth without regret. Both Heremod and the hypothetical chieftain neglect the poem’s opening statement on the socially approved and prudent conduct of princes:

Swā sceal geong guma gōde gewyrcean,
fromum feohgiftum on fæder bearme,
þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen
wilgesīpas, þonne wīg cume,
lēode gelæsten; lofdædum sceal
in mægþa gehwære man geþeon. (20–5)

So ought a young man to ensure by his liberality, by ready largess, while in his father's care, that close companions will in turn stand by him in his later years, his men be true when war comes; from praiseworthy deeds comes success in every nation.

On his return from Denmark, the poem epitomizes the hero's career in a judgment that seems to characterize Beowulf's career as a whole:

Swā bealdode bearn Ecgþeowes,
guma gūðum cūð, gōdum dædum,
drēah æfter dōme; nealles druncne slōg
heorðgenēatas ... (2177–80a)

Ecgþeow's offspring had thus shown himself brave, a man renowned in war, by his good deeds, had acted in accordance with honor; by no means did he strike down his close associates as they drank

Heremod killed his followers and did not give treasures to the Danes in the pursuit of *dōm*; the paradigmatic failing chieftain does not give ornamented rings "on gylp". The epitaphs to their forgotten graves might read "drēah nā æfter dōme." In their cases *oferhygd* lacks the proud spirit of "ic mæg wesan god swā hē" and abandons the pursuit of fame, a reputation for magnanimity that will survive after life has ended.

Though the search for an Anglo-Saxon word family answering to *superbia* probably began in the north, the chiefly southern *ofermōd*-family has by far the larger and more diffuse family with fourteen members including seven forms of the noun, four of the adjective, two of the adverb, and just one verb form. Despite this verbal extravagance, six members dominate the group: the nouns *ofermōdness*, *ofermōdigness*, and *ofermēttu*, the adjectives *ofermōd* and *ofermōdig*, and the verb, *ofermōd(i)gian*. Although Christian learning and scholarship first flowered – and reached its highest point – in the north, the south had a larger population, greater wealth, and consequently more numerous well-funded religious institutions that could copy manuscripts and produce new works.

To find narrative contexts of Anglo-Saxon words with a meaning like *superbia* in texts not specifically Christian in origin and purpose yields few examples and suggests that common Anglo-Saxon (and Anglo-Saxons) rarely focused on the concept of the cardinal sins. The multiple texts of the chronicles, some hundreds of pages of parchment, have only three instances of words in the mighty *ofermōd*-group. The A text (Bately) for 750 reports "Hēr Cūþred cyning gefeaht uuið Æþelhūn þone ofermedan ealdormann" ("In this year King Cuthred defeated Æthelhun the *ofermedan* ealdorman"). In 752 "Hēr Cūþred gefeaht þy .xii. gēre his rīces æt Beorhhorda wið Æþelbald" ("In this year, the

twelfth of his reign,³ Cuthred defeated Æthelbald at Beorhthord"). The D (Cubbin) and E (Irvine) texts give Æthelbald his royal title and add that Cuthred put him to flight. Presumably those scribes took *gefeahrt* to mean 'defeated' rather than simply 'fought' and therefore assumed Æthelbald's flight. The A text for 753 reports "Hēr Cūpred feaht wip Walas" ("In this year Cuthred fought with Britons"). The contrast between *gefeahrt* (750), *gefeahrt* (752) and *feaht* (753) suggests a claim of victories in 750 and 752, but hints that the battle of 753 ended inconclusively (or worse). The contrast between the opponents in these conflicts – *Æpelhūn þone ofermedan ealdormann* (A 750), *þone ofermodigan ealdormann* (D 750), *Æthelbald* (A 752), *Æthelbald Myrcna cyning* (D 752), and simply *Walas* (A 753) – isolates Æthelhun, the only opponent charged with *superbia* (or a like fault), perhaps even hints he mused "ic mæg wesan cyning swā hē." Kings and peoples may fight without being charged with *superbia*, but seemingly an *ealdormann* violates the great principle of subordination when he comes into conflict with a king.

However, the E text's (Irvine 2004) annal for 750 runs: "Hēr Cūðred Westseaxna cining gefeahrt wið Æpelhūn þone eoformodigan ealdormann" ("... Æthelhun the boar-spirited ealdormann ..."). Given Anglo-Saxon respect or awe at the wild boar, the adjective praises Æthelhun's courageous spirit. The scribe of the E text followed the "common stock" of the ASC which almost certainly read *þone ofermedan ealdormann* as in the A and C texts (B has no annal for 750). In short, the scribe of E probably took his source's *þone ofermedan* as praise of Æthelhun's courage rather than reproof of his *superbia* and revised his original to *eoformodigan* making that meaning clear. The wild boar symbolized royalty, protection, and fertility and forcefully represented power (Hatto 1957: 155–60; Speake 1980: 79–81) as in *Maxims II* "eofor sceal on holte / tōðmægenes trum" (O'Keeffe: 11, "a wild boar must live in a wood, powerful because of his tusks"). Speake (1980: 80) notes that the Old Norse *jöfurr* (cognate with AS *eofor*) becomes a term for 'chief' in poetry. The Geatish warrior Eofor struck down Ongentheow, the formidable Swedish king (*Beowulf* 2484–8a) who had threatened a Geatish force with utter destruction. Eofor and his brother Wulf receive a grant of land making them both chiefs in the Geatish world (*Beowulf* 2989–98). Eofor, like Ecgþeow (*Beowulf*'s father), receives his king's only daughter as his wife.

The hierarchical principle of subordination might blame an Æthelhun, or perhaps any *ealdorman*, for engaging in battle with a king, but the story of Sigebyrht, Cynewulf, and Cyneheard includes no instances of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary for *superbia* despite clear

³ The year of Cuthred's reign given is wrong. He died in 756, his twenty-ninth year as king (Whitelock 1979: 175 n. 8).

indications of a struggle for royal power among the West Saxons including a *coup d'état*, a royal assassination, and a failed rebellion or *putsch*. The annal for 754 in the A text (Bately 1986) begins with the death of the warlike Cuthred: "Hēr Cūþred forþferde ..." ("in this year, Cuthred died") and closes with Sigebyrht's succession: "... and Sigebyrht fēng tō Wesseaxna rīce 7 hēold ān gēar" ("... and Sigebyrht succeeded to the kingdom and ruled for one year"). In A the justly famous annal for 755 (which includes events of 784) begins: "Hēr Cynewulf benam Sigebyrht his rīces 7 Westseaxna wiotan for unryhtum dædum būton Hāmtūnscīre ..." ("In this year Cynewulf and the council of the West Saxons took his kingdom from Sigebyrht except for Hampshire ..."). The D and E texts of the chronicle report that "Cynewulf benam Sigebyrhte his mæge [his kinsman] his rīces" making explicit the blood relationship of Sigebyrht and Cynewulf.

The story continues with Cynewulf's intention to exile Cyneheard who learned that the king was visiting his mistress in Merton; the annal for 784 succinctly records the subsequent action: "Hēr Cyneheard ofslōh Cynewulf cyning, 7 hē þær wearð ofslegen 7 .lxxxiiii. manna mid him ..." ("In this year Cyneheard killed Cynewulf and he was slain there with eighty-four men ..."). The annal for 755(A) closes its longer and more detailed account of these events noting that "... hiera [Cynewulf's and Cyneheard's] ryhtfæderen cyn gæþ to Cerdice ..." ("... and their direct paternal line of descent goes back to Cerdic ..."). And thus, unless Sigebyrht and Cyneheard were half-brothers only, so did Sigebyrht's descent. Or in short, all the principals in the struggle for power were eligible for the rule of the West Saxons by their common ancestry. A struggle between men with legitimate claims to power apparently exempts them all from a charge of being *ofermæde* or *ofermōdig* even if one of them stands accused of unjust actions and the censorious might reproach another for manslaughter. The idea of *superbia* held by the annalist responsible for the entries in the A text for 750, 752, 753 754, 755, and 784 deserves attention.

The smallest family of Anglo-Saxon words answering to the *superbia* group, *mōdig*-, has five members but only three (*mōdigness*-, *mōdig*-, and *mōd(i)gan*) appear frequently. This economy probably depends on the influence of Ælfric's prolific writing and disciplined style. Schabram may overestimate the late southern dominance of *mōdig*-, but he soundly judges that this word family answers to forms of *superbia* in southern texts composed or copied in and after Ælfric's active life. In his earliest collection of works, the *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric favored *mōdig*-, but *ofermēttu* appears twice, *ofermōd*, *oferhygdig*, and *prȳte*, have one appearance each (Schabram 1965: 88–93). Clearly Ælfric realized the concept had found various lexical equivalents, but decided on one, *mōdig*- and his later writings include no other equivalents for *superbia*. Ælfric must have known that words in this group commonly

had meanings outside of the semantic field of *superbia* and indeed commonly held honorific senses. Even in a post-Ælfrician religious text, *mōdig* could have an entirely honorific sense as in the *Menologium* (O’Keeffe 2001: 5):

Swā þī ylcan dæge æþele gefēran,
Philippus 7 Iacobas, feorh āgefān,
mōdige magoþegnas for meotudes lufan.

Also, on that same day, the noble companions, Philip and James, the brave apostles, gave up their lives for the love of God.⁴

Wulfstan, Ælfric’s younger contemporary and fellow southerner, preferred members of the *ofermōd*- family and derivatives of *prūt*- (Schabram 1965: 93–9). In Schabram’s terms, Wulfstan’s *superbia* vocabulary included the new (*prūt*-) and the archaic (*ofermōd*-).

Despite Ælfric’s powerful influence, the ASC has only one example of *mōdig*- as a rendering for *superbia* (or a serious moral fault). The E text (Irvine 2004: 97–8) of the ASC for 1086 breaks into a non-traditional form of poetry lamenting the harshness of William the Conqueror’s rule and charging the king with becoming proud (*mōdigan*). The annalist complains of William’s policy of forced labor, his financial exactions, his dedication to greed, and at the greatest length and highest passion of this detailed outburst decries William’s game laws:

He sætte mycel dēorfrīð, 7 he lægde laga þærwið
þet swā hwā swā slōge heort oððe hinde, þet hine man sceolde blendian.
He forbēad þā heorta swylce ēac þā bāras;
swā swiðe hē lufode þā hēadēor swilce hē wære heora fæder.
Ēac hē sætte be þām haran þet hī mōsten frēo faran.
His rīce men hit mændon, 7 earme men hit beceordan.
Ac hē wæs swā stīð þet hē ne rōhte heora eallra nīð.

He established a great game preserve and made laws specifying that anyone who killed a hart or hind there was to be blinded. He protected the harts and the wild boar; and he loved the red deer as if he were their father. He also ruled that hares should not be chased.⁵ His powerful men lamented it [his rule, or his game laws specifically] and the poor were disgruntled with it. Nevertheless, he was so obstinate that he did not care about their hatred.

⁴ James and Philip are, presumably, the martyred apostles who were venerated on 1 May until the modern era.

⁵ The text reads *hēadēor*, ‘noble deer’ or ‘tall deer,’ the male red deer (*cervus elaphus*) may be four to five feet tall at the shoulder, though the hinds are smaller. Hares are a highly prized game animal sometimes pursued on foot by men and dogs, usually beagles or bassets. William and his court, of course, had hunting rights in the preserve.

The annalist prays that God forgive William's sins (confirming that *mōdigan* charges William with *superbia*) and be merciful to him. William reverses the conduct of an idealized ruler, instead of giving others wealth he seizes it from them. He abuses his followers and ignores their anger, a course of action that resembles the *oferhygd* of Heremod and Hrothgar's hypothetical nobleman. In this Anglo-Saxon view, the king deliberately violated the social norms of the time; his game laws, the annalist might have said in a later era, offended against the ancient constitution of the English people. William's sin of *superbia* takes shape in a real world context, in specific actions and the attitudes underlying them. As in Hrothgar's parable, the grasping and ungracious king dies and his successor deals out the hoarded wealth freely – though for the sake of his predecessor's (and father's) soul.

A learned justice of the American Supreme Court claimed that though he could not define pornography, he knew it when he saw it. An Anglo-Saxon scribe or poet might have echoed that sentiment regarding pride as *superbia*. The much discussed case of *ofermōd* in *The Battle of Maldon* (line 89) (Gneuss 1976: 117–37; Clark 1979: 273–80) has centered on words and definitions, but in the Anglo-Saxon terms sketched here, Byrhtnoth seems free of the familiar forms of pride. He sees his place in a comprehensive order from God to king and his duty as the defense of his ruler's lands and wealth. Strikingly, no other member of the English force who has a speaking part mentions God, or the king, or the king's realm. Byrhtnoth seems to be exactly what he is, an *ealdormann* in command of a military force. Before the battle begins, he acknowledges the uncertainty of its outcome, like Beowulf and unlike Grendel. Byrhtnoth is *foreþancol*. The poem explicitly mentions Byrhtnoth's past generosity and his loyal followers neither lament nor grumble at his leadership and several express their love for him.

Poets could not afford *prūt* for lack of alliterating words, but writers in prose gradually accepted this useful loan word. Common Anglo-Saxon (and traditional poetry) borrowed few Celtic words (except for place-names and river-names) despite the long acquaintance of the two peoples; the Scandinavian languages, despite the Danelaw, contributed relatively few words to pre-conquest English (Campbell 1959: §§545–65). The successful Old French family first appears in a double gloss, *prēde* / *ofermōde* to the Kentish *Proverbia Salomonis* (Schabram 1965: 52–3); Ker dated the MS (Cotton Vespasian D. VI) to the middle of the tenth century (Schabram 1965: 52). The Benedictines probably managed to bring the only pre-conquest French loan word into English (Schabram 1965: 14–15; Campbell 1959: §567). Since few Anglo-Saxons knew French, the educated Benedictines could, like Humpty Dumpty, make the word (word group) mean, at least for a time, exactly what they wanted it to mean. An educated native speaker of English will almost surely assume that *superbia* in an English text has Lewis and

Short's sense I (or means pride as a cardinal sin) and will probably not know that the word could have sense II.

From the end of the Anglo-Saxon age to the present, the descendants of *prūt-* and *prūd-* have dominated the semantic field that includes *superbia*. The lexicographical record generally seems to indicate a gradual ambiguation of an originally precise denomination of a cardinal or mortal sin. The family of the loanword *prūt-* (and *prūd-*) includes twelve members some in mutated (anagogical rather than historical) forms with *y* and derivatives like *prūtian* and its gerund, *prütung* and the compounds *oferprūt*, *prūtswongor*, *worouldprýde*, and *oferprýdo*. The multiple forms of *prūt-* (with analogical umlaut, prefixes, suffixes, and in compounds) attest to its eventual acceptance as a native rather than a foreigner. And as a native, *prūt-* could lose its absolute clarity of meaning (the deadly sin of pride) and even acquire a complementary sense as in ASC F (Baker 2000) for 1006: "Ðær mihten gesēon Winceastre lēode prūtne here 7 uneargne, þæt hī be heora gate tō sǣ ēodan 7 mete 7 mǣdmas ofer .l. mīla fram sǣ fetton" ("There the people of Winchester could see a proud and courageous army, in as much as they went to sea by their [Winchester's] gates and carried off food and plunder from more than fifty miles from the sea"). The second adjective, *unearg* (not craven, i.e. very courageous) makes clear the first is an honorific even if bestowed with some chagrin. The scribe knows *prūt* and *unearg* as terms of praise he must allow the invaders rather than the home team. The probable date of the F text of the ASC ranges from 1100 to 1117 (Baker 2000: §§99–100) and, despite preferring *prūt* to *ranc* (the reading in E), "his [the scribe's] vocabulary is unmixed with French" (Baker: §104). The scribe of F "revised an ancestor of MS E" (Baker 2000: vii), hence his deliberate choice of *prūt* rather than *ranc* attests to the complete naturalization of the Old French loan.

The history of French-derived 'pride' and 'proud' in English illustrates that words designating anything less concrete than a fork lift may move between honorific, pejorative, and neutral as speakers or writers take varying attitudes toward persons and actions. The Old French *proz* / *pruz* (nom.) and *prod* / *prud* (oblique) had generally honorific meanings (OED, *sv* pride, proud) that Modern French *preux* and *prud'homme* continue. But in England, the Benedictines bent *prūt* from an honorific term to *superbia*, the first of the cardinal sins.

The earliest and best surviving text of the *Chanson de Roland* (the Oxford MS), written in an Anglo-Normand dialect between 1125 and 1150, descends from an original not in Anglo-Normand (Segre 2003: §2.2). The origins of the *Chanson* roughly coincide with the period in which the Old French loanword *prūt-* became the dominant choice for *superbia*. One well-known line in the *Chanson* (1093) opens the possibility that *proz* might signify a fault in character: "Rollant est proz e Oliver est sage, / Ambedui unt merveillus vasselage" (1093–4,

"Roland is brave and Oliver is prudent / both are surpassingly courageous"), but the second line cuts against a negative reading of the first. Earlier in the poem Ganelon tells Marsilion, the ruler of Saragossa, that Charlemagne will have a rearguard as he leaves Spain:

Iert i sis niés, li quens Rollant, ço creit,
E Oliver, li proz e li curteis.
Mort sunt li cunte, se est ki mei en creit.
Carles verrat sun grant orguill cadeir,
N'avrat talent que ja mais vus guerreit. (575–9)

I am sure Roland, the count, will be there [in the rearguard], and the courageous and courtly Oliver. The counts are good as dead, if anyone trusts me. Charlemagne will see his great pride fall; he'll never have the spirit to make war against you again.

Ganelon acknowledges Oliver's heroic virtue (and courtliness) – *proz* and *curteis* – as he blames Charlemagne's "great pride" – his *grant orguill* – *superbia* or perhaps arrogance without a reference to cardinal sin.

Old Norse-Icelandic (Cleasby and Vigfusson 1962) derivatives of *prūt* preserve its honorific sense which frequently designates fine appearance as well as gallantry and courage; *prúðr* sense I 'fine, magnificent, stately' and sense II 'gallant, brave,' *prýði*, 1 'an ornament,' 2 'gallantry, bravery,' *prýði-maðr* 'a brave man.' Modern Icelandic (Böðvarsson 1983, *Íslensk orðabók*) has *prúður* sense 1 *kurteis, stilltur, hógværr* ('well-mannered, self-controlled, calm') and 2 *fagur, glæsilegur* ('fair, magnificent'); *prýði* has sense 1 *fegurð, snóturleiki*, ('beauty, elegance'), sense 3 *ágæti, vaskleikur* ('excellence, valor'). In contrast, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Simpson and Weiner 1989, hereafter OED) definition of 'proud' (sense 1) ends 'usually in a bad sense' and cites passages from the AS period to Modern English; sense 7, 'characterized by great vigour, force, or vitality ...' has no Anglo-Saxon examples. The OED entry on 'pride' reaches an honorific meaning at sense 8b 'honour, glory,' in 9a 'the best, highest, most excellent or flourishing state or condition ...,' and sense 10 'mettle or spirit in a horse.' The *English Dialect Dictionary* (Wright 1903) under 'pridy' and 'pridey' has 'Proud, conceited; forward, advanced' and 'Handsome, good looking' much like Icelandic *prýði*. The *Dictionary of American Regional English* (Hall 2002) under 'pridy / pridey' has 'Proud, handsome,' and for 'proudful,' 'Full of pride, very proud' with a citation (from ca. 1937) "We is proudful niggers, though," where the adjective bears a defiantly honorific meaning.

The most northerly record of earlier English, *The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (Aitkin and Stevenson 1986), has 'pride' sense 1 'Pride, self-esteem, arrogance ...,' sense 2a 'The object of pride; the 'cream,' the 'flower' ... (of a person or a group) ...,' 2b 'magnificence,

splendor ...,' 2c 'of great magnificence, nobility, or excellence' The adjective 'proud' has sense 1 'As a complimentary epithet of persons, esp. warriors, also animals: of noble or dignified character...,' 2 'Stately, majestic, magnificent ...,' and sense 3 'Full of pride, self-importance, or overweening: insolent.' The more copious and varied the supply of written texts, the more diverse the meanings discoverable in 'pride' and 'proud' – or less probably both words have experienced a partial amelioration that left their negative meanings intact while adding positive senses.

Learned Anglo-Saxon clerics needed to find words to match the meanings they saw in *superbia* and to understand *superbia* in terms consistent with their cultural assumptions. The search for the right word for *superbia* led to forty-one solutions, strongly indicating that none of them satisfied. Students of the Anglo-Saxon age have little surviving evidence for the other meanings of the native *superbia* word-hoard that rendered those choices inadequate. Those unhelpful meanings lived in common Anglo-Saxon and probably in traditional poetry when it was not explicitly Christian in purpose. The last lexical resort, a learned loan word, once naturalized, became as unsatisfactory as the three native word families based on the roots, *hygd* and *mōd*. Like Chaucer's Criseyde, words in human language are "slyding of corage."

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Old English *gelōme*, *gelōma*, Modern English *loom*, *lame*, and Their Kin

Anatoly Liberman

... inside he could see women with a loom set up before them.
Men's heads were used instead of weights
Njal's Saga, Chapter 157

... no looms here, no dissent ...
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

With deadline looming, complex issues remain.
From a newspaper, July 4, 2005

When we encounter ancient homonyms, it is always tempting to trace them to the same etymon. As is known, Jacob Grimm found this approach rewarding. Below, an attempt will be made to find out whether Mod. Engl.* *loom* 'weaving machine', a stub of *weblōme*, as Skeat (1901: 173, originally published in 1885) was the first to show, is related to OE *gelōme* 'often,' memorable especially from the tautological binomial *oft and gelōme*. Then there is the verb *loom* 'to move slowly up and down; appear indistinctly'; its possible ties to *loom* / *gelōme* also have to be investigated.*

Earlier, the noun *loom* meant 'tool; bucket, tub, etc.,' from OE *gelōma* 'utensil, implement.' Obviously, 'bucket' and other words for 'vessel' were occasional senses. No one doubts that *gelōma* had a collective meaning (something like 'stuff?'); the prefix *ge-* is transparent, yet the noun referred to single objects. In *AeEW*, *gelōma* and *gelōme* stand in adjacent lines, and about both words Holthausen says "of unknown origin"; he does not even suggest that they can be cognate. I will return to his conclusion at the end of the paper. *ODEE* (at *loom*) cites OE *andlōman*, pl. 'apparatus, furniture.' *OED* adds that the ulterior etymology of *loom* is obscure, but that some people thought of a connection with OE *gelōme* (OHG *kilōmo*) and reconstructed the primary

* The following abbreviations are used below: Dan. – Danish, Du. – Dutch, EF – East Frisian, G. – German, Gk. – Greek, Go. – Gothic, It. – Italian, Lat. – Latin, ME – Middle English, MHG – Middle High German, Mod. Engl. – Modern English, OE – Old English, OHG – Old High German, OI – Old Icelandic, Russ. – Russian, Skt – Sanskrit, Swed. – Swedish.

meaning as ‘things in frequent use.’ I am not sure who those “some people” are and have seen this reconstruction only in *CD*. Its etymological editor (Charles P.G. Scott) expressed little confidence in the idea he mentioned.

Old dictionaries, which groped their way through chance look-alikes, were usually reticent when it came to *loom*; at best, they cited the Old English form. One approach to the sought-for etymology can be rejected as certainly wrong: the loom did not get its name because it wove, produced yarn, or had something to do with clothing. Yet Minsheu (1617), the author of the first etymological dictionary of English, turned for help to Lat. *glomus* ‘a ball of thread’ (this idea was sometimes repeated even much later). He may have remembered Isidore’s irrefutable Latin pair *telaria* ‘loom’: *tela* ‘cloth’ (see Isidore, 389/XXIX). Also, today we know that the root of *loom* did not have initial *g-* or *h-*.

Surprisingly, such a reliable authority as Henry Cecil Wyld (*UDEL*) thought it possible that *loom* was related to Gk. *λῶμα* ‘hem, border of a garment,’ Lat. *lōdix* ‘a blanket, counterpane,’ and OHG *lodo* ‘coarse cloth.’ The German form had a short vowel (the macron in Wyld’s dictionary is a mistake), while *λῶμα* and *lōdix* hardly trace to the inherited Indo-European vocabulary. Less surprisingly, a similar etymology turns up in Makovskii (2000: 201–2), whose dictionary is full of the wildest guesses. Skt *lóman* ‘hair, wool’ turns up there too, but in *lóma*, rather than *lóman*, the historically relevant first consonant is *r*, not *l* (*KEWA*, III: 90). I have no explanation for Thomson’s (1826) comparison of *loom* with *limb*, but his dictionary abounds with suggestions of this type.

OE *andlōman* has a Modern Dutch cognate *al(l)aam* ~ *al(e)m* ‘utensils; tool; artifice,’ a regional (southern) word (*NEW*). Kiliaen (1599) knew this noun, and both Wedgwood (1888; the same in the previous editions) and Weekley (1923) cited it. Wedgwood also mentioned Kiliaen’s *werckalaem* ‘tools.’ This is then all one can glean from English dictionaries. We are made aware of the Old English collective form *gelōma*, the possibly unrelated OHG *kilomo*, OE *andlōman*, and Du *al(l)aam* ~ *al(e)m*. *OED* (*loom*, noun) refers to ME *ylome* ‘often,’ which still occurred as late as the fourteenth century in the familiar phrase *oft and ylome*, but that entry does not propose a tie, however uncertain, between *gelōma* and *gelōme*.

In addition to the word for ‘often,’ we find Mod. Engl. *loom* ‘gentle, easy’ (said about a wind or breeze), a nautical term. It turned up only in the sixteenth century. *OED* suggested a “corruption” of Dan. *lugn*. But *lugn* is a Swedish word; its Danish cognate is *lun*. More probably, the early Modern English adjective is West Germanic: native English or a borrowing from Low German. To make progress, we have to turn to Old and Middle High German. If English scholars had paid attention to OHG *kilomo*, a word half-dismissed but not ignored in *OED* (at

loom; unfortunately, not at *ylome*), they would have discovered a valuable clue to OE *gelōme* and possibly to OE *gelōma*.

In German, the simplex (an adjective without a prefix or suffix), MHG *lüene* 'slack, soft, gentle,' like its English analog, also surfaced late. The noun *lüeme* 'softness' and the verb *lüemen* 'to exhaust' have been recorded too. Modern Swiss dialects have retained numerous adjectives with this root. They mean 'soft, weak, gentle, tame, etc.' Frisian and Dutch words refer to the same sphere: cf. Du. *loom* 'slack, dull, slow, heavy; languid.' There was something in the sound complex *lōm* that prevented its appearance outside bound morphemes. *Loom* 'tool' emerged without a prefix only in Middle English. Mod. Engl. *loom* 'gentle' (regardless of whether *loom*¹ and *loom*² are related) is, as noted, a sixteenth-century word. *Lüene*, a German adjective, likewise, does not antedate the Middle period. The noun felt more at home in compounds than as an independent entity: cf. Mod. Engl. *loom*, from *weblōme*, and other compounds cited above. *Heirloom* goes back to late Middle English. If *hoodlum* can be derived from **hoodloom*, was the early Hoodlum a hatter?

Especially productive was the High German suffix *-luomi*. Some words occurred only in glosses, so that we know their translation into Latin, but even without the assistance of Latin they are usually transparent. The relevant adjectives are as follows: *gastluomi* 'hospitable' (cf. the verb *gastluomen* 'to accept as a guest'), *skatoluomi* 'shady,' *skazluomi* 'advantageous,' *skataluomi* 'enriched,' *sultluomi* 'pestilent,' *sumarluomi* 'sunny, hot,' *unmannaluomi* 'frightful, savage' (corresponding nouns also existed), and *wazzarluomi* 'watery.' I will skip one verb with this suffix and two adjectives ending in *-lâmi*. See this material in Heinertz 1924: 247–8, Rooth 1971, Heidermanns 1993: 385–6, and EWA IV: 102–3. Given such a proliferation of suffixed words, we may wonder why *lüene* surfaced only in Middle High German.

The meaning of the recorded adjectives is 'slack, weak,' and Jacob Grimm connected **lōmi* with *lam-* 'lame' (1826, II: 41, # 467, the section on lost strong verbs). This etymology has nearly universal support. It was endorsed by the most influential scholars of the "classical" period, including Ettmüller (1851: 156), Schmidt (1883: 111, # 16), and Kluge (1926: secs. 185 and 246); Rooth 1971 gives more references to the same effect. Today it can be found in Pokorny (1959: 674).

One can easily reconstruct the path from 'lame' to 'weak.' Slavic *lomati* 'to break' fits in equally well (ESSI XVI: 14–15, and 24–27), but the same cannot be said about *-luomi*: the traditional German gloss of *-luomi* (< **-lōmi*) is '*versehen mit*' ('provided, equipped with'). Indeed, *shady* denotes 'provided with shade,' *watery* 'provided with water,' and so forth. But 'provided with' is almost the opposite of 'weak, slack; lame.' Heinertz (1924: 248–9) did not reject but questioned the leap

from *lahm* 'lame' to *nachgiebig* 'yielding' and discerned an active rather than a passive force implied by *-luomi* (p. 249). He ended up denying Grimm's etymology because, in his opinion, it blocked the way from 'weak' to 'often.'

By contrast, Rooth (1971) defended Grimm, but his own string involves uncomfortably many small shifts: 'weak, slack' > 'yielding, gentle, friendly' > 'provided with something in great quantities' > 'richly, a-plenty' > 'frequent, constant.' Any or almost any two meanings can be connected, given a sufficient number of intermediate steps. As will be shown below, Heinertz had no need to offer a radically new derivation of *-luomi*, but he was probably right in noticing the idea of activity in the suffix.

A few complications could have been avoided if Slavic *lomati* 'break' had attracted greater attention. In dictionaries and special works, the Slavic forms appear only as congeners of Mod. Engl. *lame* ~ G. *lahm* ~ OI *lami*, but their semantic aspect is no less important than their form. According to Kluge-Mitzka, the primary meaning of *lahm* 'lame' was '*gliederschwach*' ('weak in limbs'). Seebold (in Kluge-Seebold) abridged the entry by half, expunged the reference to *luomi*, and suggested that the starting point of the development was "the lack of something." He cited *gichtbrechig* 'gouty' and *Gebrechen* 'weakness' but missed the clues those words suggested.

I believe that we should use Slavic *lomati* as our starting point and reconstruct the root **lam-* / **lōm-* 'broken'. 'Broken' implies 'not solid' and 'yielding.' The English participle *yielding* is more convenient for further analysis than G. *nachgiebig* because it can be constructed as combining passive and active overtones. By substituting *yielding* (*ergiebig*) for *nachgiebig*, we will get what we need: 'yielding shade,' 'yielding water,' etc. 'Broken' as starting point will also clarify the etymology of OE *gelōme* 'often' and its closest cognates.

We can distinguish two semes in 'broken': 1) "not solid; soft; yielding" (such is a broken reed) and 2) "made up of odds and ends, in fragments; in close proximity but lacking cohesion" (such is a broken social order). Isolating semes is the main business of lexicographers. For example, OED isolates sixteen senses of *broken*. This number is neither arbitrary nor sacrosanct. The field encompassing *broken plate*, *broken marriage*, and *broken man* lacks discernible boundaries between the burrows. The two semes mentioned above are what is necessary for the explanation that follows.

The suffix *-luomi* (< **lōmi*) appears to depend on the notion of 'yielding, *ergiebig*.' A look at the words for 'often' shows that they go back to the idea of "thick, dense, crowded together" or "heap, mass," "with shift from spatial to temporal notion" (Buck 1949: 14.32). The easiest examples are G. *häufig* (*Haufe* 'heap'), Du. *dickwijs* (*dick* 'thick'), and Russ. *chasto* (*chastyi* 'thick, dense; frequent'). The other examples

in Buck are equally revealing. Although Goth. *ufta*, (O)E *oft*, etc. are words “of uncertain etymology,” Wood’s derivation of this adverb from the base of IE **upo*, as in Goth. *uf* ‘under’ (so ‘squeezed together compactly’), raises no serious objections (Wood 1898: 214/3). *Gelōme* is not in Buck’s list.

The seme “made up of odds and ends; in close proximity but lacking cohesion,” which accounts for the rise of *häufig*, *dickwijs*, and *chasto*, will account without any complications for *gelōme*. The prefix *ge-* is as though it were made to order for us to discover the origin of the adverb and the noun: *gelōma* designated a heap or a set of tools (even though the noun is singular; perhaps the ancient noun was plural, with the later common change of the number: cf. Liberman 2011 on the history of the word *wife*), while *gelōme* emerged as a trivial case of the change: here, from ‘crowded together’ to ‘often.’ Once the prefix *ge-* / *ye-* was lost, *loom*, the aphetic form of *weblōme*, remained as the only trace of the *lōme* group. Middle English also had *lome* ‘penis’ and ‘fellow’ with derogatory epithets (cf. Mod. Engl. *tool* and *fellow*, both used for ‘penis’). It has an analog in German: in the modern language, we find *Lümmel* ‘lout’ and again ‘penis.’ English dictionaries record *loon* “a stupid fellow; a clown; with various shades of intensity as an opprobrious epithet” (so CD). Shakespeare and Coleridge, quoted in CD, knew *loon* as a term of abuse. In today’s American English, *loon* ‘fool, idiot’ is believed to be an abbreviation of *lunatic*, but this may be a case of unusually apt folk etymology because *loon* is a common alteration of *loom*, as in the bird name *loon*. (Cf. what NEW has to say about G. *Laune* ‘mood; whim’ in the entry *luin*.) EDD gives examples of *loom* ‘scoundrel, etc.’ which may be a borrowing from Scandinavian.

As pointed out above, Jacob Grimm’s idea that *lōm-* is related to the word for ‘lame’ has nearly universal support. The earliest dissenting voice was Heinertz’s. He seems to have been right in detecting an active meaning in OHG *-luomi*: *ergiebig* rather than *nachgiebig*, but he could not unravel the semantic knot he faced and asked (1926: 249) what ‘weak, lame’ has to do with ‘often’ (Schmidt 1883: 11, note, also dissociated OE *gelōme* from *-lúome*). Indeed, at present they have nothing in common. But once we start with ‘broken’ and its close but non-identical senses ‘soft’ and ‘pressed (heaped) together,’ we will see the connection. Baffled by the semantic disparities, Heinertz decided to look for a different etymology of *-luomi* and concentrated on the Indo-European root **lē(i)-* ‘property; to grant property.’ This solution fails to convince for two reasons. First, so-called root etymologies rarely ‘yield’ worthwhile results. Second, the root **lē(i)-* was not productive in Germanic. At best, it can be detected in Go. *unledi* ‘poverty’ and its cognates.

Rooth (1971: 31) mentioned Ibach, who shared Heinertz’s view. Ibach’s work is on the Old High German *Benediktinerregel*; in passing

(1956: 106, note), he observed that *-luomi* belongs with Swed. *lummig* 'having rich foliage' (earlier, it also meant 'shady; thick and round'), a word that Heinertz discussed in detail (1926: 250–3). As pointed out, 'thick' and 'often' ('dickwijs') go together in the most natural way, hence the justification for the section on *lummig*.

Ibach not only followed that part of Heinertz's argument; he also repeated what appears its least persuasive conclusion, namely that *-lōme* and *lam* owe their proximity to folk etymology. Heinertz went so far as to suggest that this unhappy proximity had contributed to the disappearance of the words having the suffix *-luomi*. Be that as it may, Ibach only joined Heinertz and said nothing new.

Heinertz's other ally was Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (*ÁBM*). Modern Icelandic has the words *lómur* 'deceit' and several compounds with *lóm*: *hrekkiálómur* 'rogue, swindler,' *lómbrögð* 'trickery,' *lómgeður* 'treacherous,' and *lómslegur* 'cunning, perfidious.' They are reminiscent of G. *Lümmel* and Mod. Engl. *loom* ~ *loon* and may have been part of the late medieval international slang popular in the underworld. *ÁBM* refers them to the words having the root **l̥e(i)-* and denies their affinity with the *lame* group. However, **l̥e(i)-* means 'property'; why then 'deceit, perfidy, swindling'? Without the intermediate link 'tool' there is no answer. The entry in the Icelandic dictionary contains no references, but the mention of folk etymology and **l̥e(i)-* suggests that the solution came directly or indirectly from Heinertz. As made clear above, I find Heinertz's etymology devoid of merit.

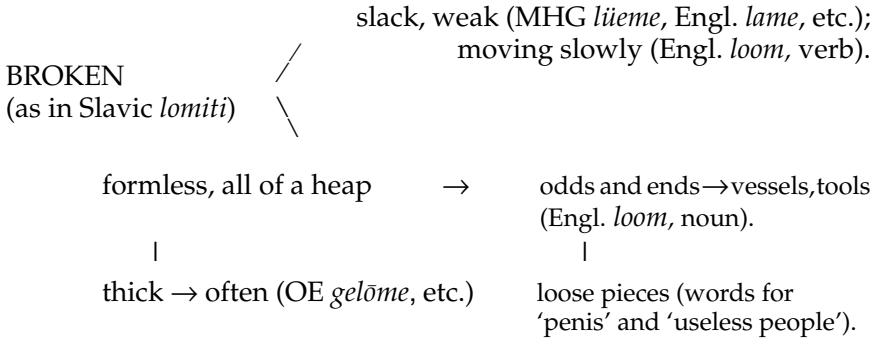
We can now turn to the verb *loom*. The older English dictionaries that risked saying anything about the origin of this verb derived it from some word pertaining to light or its absence. Among the favorites were *gleam* and *gloom*. *Gl*-words designating glowing are plentiful. In none of them is *g-* a remnant of the old prefix, so that in the present context they can be ignored. More realistic were the attempts to trace *loom* to OE *lēoman*, OI *ljóma*, etc. 'to shine.' This etymology can be found in numerous works, including most nineteenth-century editions of Webster and Skeat (1882). Although it looks reasonable, it also lacks merit, because it does not account for the vowel in *loom* and provides no bridge between 'shine' and 'appear faintly in the distance.' Wedgwood's (1888) reference to It. *lume* 'light' ignores the geographical aspect of the word's history. *Loom* emerged first in the north and only in nautical use (in describing ships seen from a distance and moving slowly). *OED* has no citation of it antedating 1587.

At some time, Skeat must have had an excellent idea. He discovered EF *lōmen* 'to move slowly' and Swed. dialectal *loma* (the same meaning). Such was also the first recorded meaning of the English verb, borrowed or native. Apparently, Skeat informed Murray about his discovery, and it appeared in *OED* with reference to him. See also Skeat (1910). This etymology can hardly be improved, and one

cannot but regret the verdict of Webster that the origin of *loom* (verb) is unknown.

This, then, is how I see the semantic picture in its entirety:

The Development of the Root 'Broken'



The honorand of this volume noted (Fulk 2014: 363) that divining historical truth (which is the chief aim of philology) amounts to finding "the only very plausible explanation." The scheme given above aims at exactly this, namely at providing the most plausible explanation of a group of seemingly disparate facts. However, it would be unfair to pass in silence some gaps in my scheme. I deliberately left out the obscure history of the suffix *-luomi*. Incorporating it into the general order of things is easy (from 'slack' to 'yielding, *ergiebig*'), but we still won't know how it arose. Did an unbound analog of MHG *-lüeme* ever exist, or was the suffix coined as suffix? Heinertz wondered why such a productive morpheme disappeared from German. His explanation has little value, but the question remains. To increase our puzzlement, we can add that *lame* – *lahm* – *lami* have survived, while the words on the long grade are few and far between. Even OE *gelōme*, supported by a popular idiom, did not outlive Middle English.

In historical linguistics, the principle "all or none" never works, and it is unrealistic to expect total victories, but perhaps something should be said here about the factors that slow down etymological studies. To discover the origin of any word, and especially of any old word, the etymologist has to know as many related forms as possible. *OED*'s editors, Skeat, and Wedgwood before them understood the nature of their task (except that Wedgwood's lists were chaotic), but the same cannot always be said about those who succeeded them in the area of English philology. To illustrate this point, I will confine myself to the subject of this paper. Holthausen, in his dictionary devoted to the etymology of Old English (*AeEW*), entered *gelōma* and *gelōme* next to each other and, as we have seen, made do with the same suggestion (if it can be called a suggestion): "Of unknown origin." I assume that even he,

at the time probably the best-read specialist in this area, did not think of the suffix *-luomi*, though Jacob Grimm had already pointed to the right solution.

Since Holthausen's days the literature on practically anything has increased enormously. No single researcher can even try to find, let alone digest it. Our etymological dictionaries pride themselves on adding laryngeals to the protoforms. I have nothing against this practice, except that the deeper they delve, the more upper levels they miss. We are in need of bibliographical surveys of everything written about every word, rather than of protoforms with two asterisks. Feist had such a database for Gothic, Hofmann for Latin, and Mayrhofer for Sanskrit, but those are dead languages; their vocabulary does not increase. For living languages only a well-financed group of specialists can produce exhausting surveys. Given the moribund state of historical linguistics on our campuses, its low prestige when it comes to funding, and a near total absence of teaching jobs in this area, the work vital for the success of etymology will not be done until the pendulum in the humanities swings in the opposite direction. At present, English etymology as a branch of scholarship has no bright future, and great achievements in it do not loom in the distance. But history is long and patient, and what seems a utopian project today may become reality the day after tomorrow. Let us wait and hope.

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Worm: A Lexical Approach to the *Beowulf* Manuscript

Haruko Momma

Worms will turn

According to the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, *wyrm* as a simplex occurs approximately 325 times in the extant literature, and it is found in a variety of texts (Healey 1998–). The wide distribution of *wyrm* may have something to do with the word's polysemy. When students of Anglo-Saxon literature see or hear this word, the image that first comes to their minds is probably that of the fire dragon of *Beowulf*. We are also familiar with the *wyrm* in the book-moth riddle of the Exeter Book, a creature that eats away its own habitat, both the parchment and the ink, without, however, digesting the non-material matter of the codex. The literal answer of this riddle is the insect, and as such the *wyrm* is synonymous with the first word of the text, that is, *moððe* ('moth').¹ This word seems to serve as a generic term for small, and often crawling, insects, and as such it may refer to, for instance, silk-worms or creatures found in day-old manna (e.g. Clemoes 1997: 533, and Marsden 2008: 111). *Wyrm* may also be used as an element of compounds to gloss Latin words. The *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* shows that *bombex* may be glossed as *sīdwyrms* ('silk-worm'), and *gurgulio* as *cawelwyrms* (lit. 'cabbage-worm'; 'caterpillar' [?]). The same glossator also uses the phrase *hundes wyrms* (lit. 'dog's worm') for *ricinus* ('tick').²

Furthermore, the word *wyrm* refers to snakes and other creeping *animalia*, and as such the plural form *wyrmas* is often juxtaposed with *wilddēor* ('wild animals'). For those of us who are used to Linnean taxonomy and the Darwinian tree of evolution, the Anglo-Saxon practice

¹ *Riddle 47*, 3a. For the multiple levels of interpretation for this riddle, see Robinson 1975. All citations from Old English poems except for *Beowulf* and *Judith* are from the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, edited by George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie. All translations of Old English texts, except for those from the *Beowulf* Manuscript, are my own.

² The *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* takes these glosses from L. Kindschi's unpublished edition (i.e., of the Latin–Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32246).

of applying the same word to insects and reptiles may seem rather curious. Etymologically speaking – and here I rely on Julius Pokorny's *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* – the Old English *wyrm* ultimately comes from the Indo-European *uer-* ('to turn, to bend'). Hence the polysemy of this word may be understood as a legacy of its etymology pertaining either to the creature's shape or manner of movement. But this lexical double-duty is apparently not a pan-European phenomenon. To quote Pokorny again, Indo-European *urmi-s/urmo-s* signifies 'worm,' and this entomological range of signification is common among cognates of Indo-European *urmi-s/urmo-s* attested in such historical languages as Greek, Latin, Slavic, and Celtic (Pokorny 1959: 1152). It is, in fact, only the Germanic family that has derivations of Indo-European *urmi-s/urmo-s* referring to creatures other than insects: for example, Old Norse *ormr* refers to 'snake' (de Vriend 1962: s.v.); and Old Saxon *wurm* signifies both 'worm' and 'snake' (Tiefenbach 2010: s.v.). Old High German *wurm*, like Old English *wyrm*, may refer to 'worm,' 'snake,' or 'dragon' (Köbler 1993: s.v.), whereas modern German *Wurm* signifies 'worm' alone. The English language has experienced a similar process of semantic narrowing, for, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the cluster of definitions 'serpent, snake, dragon' is labeled as "now only arch(aic)" for the head word *worm* (s.v.). Based on the usage attested in the extant corpus, however, 'worm,' 'serpent,' and 'dragon' all seem current (or non-archaic) meanings for Old English *wyrm*.

The zoologically mixed semantic range of the Old English word *wyrm* notwithstanding, at least some of the learned Anglo-Saxons must have been aware of the scientific – as opposed to empirical – differences between these two genera, one vertebrate and one invertebrate. According to the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database, Isidore's *Etymologiae* has been identified as a source for 125 passages in the extant literature from Anglo-Saxon England. To limit the example to Book XII "Animals," contents of this book are known to have been used by, among other English writers, Ælfric, Wulfstan Cantor, the anonymous translator of Orosius's *History against the Pagans*, and the anonymous author of *Liber monstrorum*.³ The *Etymologiae* provides separate sections on snakes (*De serpentibus*) and vermin (*De verminibus*) (XII. iv–v) and explains their differences in terms of their means of locomotion and their anatomical details:

Vermin do not crawl with obvious steps, or with a pushing of scales as snakes do, because vermin do not possess the strong support of a spine, as in serpents. Rather, they achieve motion by extending the contracted parts of their little bodies forward by degrees, and contracting them

³ <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed May 23, 2015

again, and set moving like this they glide along. (XII.v.18; Barney et al. 2006: 259)

Despite its multiple meanings, *wyrm* tends not to cause interpretive difficulties, because the diverse creatures signified by this word normally have different habitats, both natural and literary. To take worms and other small insects as an example, their textual distribution depends mainly on where they live and what they eat (which often come down to the same thing). Worms that feast on corpses in the grave are probably the best remembered from the *Soul and Body* poems preserved in the Vercelli Book and the Exeter Book, and also from such early Middle English alliterative poems as *The Grave* and the Worcester *Soul's Address to the Body*.⁴ But the theme of soul and body is homiletic in origin, and these ravenous worms, being a visually effective motif to enhance the theme, are found in various homilies and homiletically informed texts.⁵ Another locus where worms are abundantly found is medical literature such as the *Lacnunga* and *Bald's Leechbook*. Many of the worms in these texts feed on living organisms, mostly human, so that they are classified according to the parts of the body they occupy, including the intestines, the ears, the eyes, the hands, the flesh, and, even, the teeth. According to *Bald's Leechbook*, for example,

Gif wyrm ete þā tēð genim ofer gēare holen rinde ond efor þrotan moran wel on swā hātum hafa on mūþe swā hāt swā þū hāttost mæge. (Cockayne 1864-6: II: 50)

If a worm eats teeth, take old holly rind and root of carline thistle, heat them and keep them in your mouth as hot as you could.

Because the entomological *wyrm* has a specific distribution in the corpus, it often helps us gauge the genre and register of a given text that may or may not use the word in this sense. According to the glossary in *Klaeber's Beowulf*, the poem uses the simplex *wyrm* twenty-two times, but none of them pertains to worms (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 462). This fact seems to tell us a few things about the poem. We all know that *Beowulf* avoids overtly Christian references, but the little *wyrm* tells us how carefully the poet crafts the pre-Christian world of the poem even at the lexical level. Here we may compare the *Beowulf* poet with Cynewulf, a religious poet who often introduces homiletic elements into his hagiographical narratives.⁶ In *Juliana*, for instance, Cynewulf uses the formulaic expression "*wyrme tō hrōþor*" ('pleasure for the worm', 416b) as shorthand for the theme of soul and body to conjure up the image of the

⁴ For the texts of these early Middle English poems, see Jones 2012: 204–31; see also Moffat 1987.

⁵ For the theme of soul and body, see, for example, Willard 1935.

⁶ For Cynewulf's homiletic sources, see, for example, Allen and Calder 1976: 79–81.

soul's lonesome journey to the otherworld, leaving behind its body in the grave. In contrast, *Beowulf* depicts a pagan world where bodies are cremated, unless, that is, they are entrusted to the ocean in a boat loaded with treasures. In the poem, dead bodies, if ever they are mentioned, lie in the battlefield as food not for worms but for ravens, wolves, and other beasts of battle.⁷ Furthermore, the absence in *Beowulf* of references to any type of entomological worms signals the poem's heightened register. Heorot seems to have no place for leeches tending warriors who suffer from the biting of swords, let alone the biting of parasitic worms. According to the Old English *Herbarium*, the recipe for stomach pains caused by worms around the navel (*ymb þone nafolan*) reads as follows: "take root of the same herb [i.e. *wulfes tæsl* 'wolf's teasel'], either juice or powder, give it to drink in wine" (*genim ðisse ylcan wyrte wyrttruman sēaw oððe dūst, syle drincan on wīne*) (de Vriend 1984: 200). In Hrothgar's hall, warriors drink wine unadulterated with medicinal herbs, as if they had never heard of worms that could reach the innermost part of their bodies, which, if protected by a skillfully woven corselet, cannot be penetrated by the point of even the sharpest edge.

In this essay, then, I will examine the use of the word *wyrm* and its synonyms not only in *Beowulf* but also in other texts in the same manuscript. The goal of this case study is not so much to re-examine the lexical field of *wyrm* as to consider the construction of the cultural geography of the *Beowulf* Manuscript. Even though such an approach is not common either in Old English word studies or in Old English manuscript studies, I believe that we will gain a new perspective on *Beowulf* and other texts in the manuscript by exploring the intersection of these two areas of Anglo-Saxon studies. While the individual texts in the *Beowulf* Manuscript have different origins, they are generally believed to have been assembled because of their common character, that is, all of them comprising "narratives about monsters" (Fulk 2010: x). I hope that this lexical study will also help us gain insight into monsters, since the semantic field of *wyrm* includes 'dragon' – the arch-monster of Old English literature – as well as such small things as the metaphorical worm of Psalm 21:7 (*ego autem sum vermis et non homo* 'but I am a worm, and no man') and insects believed to hide under the tongues of mad dogs (de Vriend 1984: 264). Such a codex-specific word study, I believe, is warranted especially given the ever growing interest in Cotton Vitellius A. xv among the general readership – a phenomenon that has become even more pronounced since the publication of Professor Fulk's *The Beowulf Manuscript* in 2010.

In the following, I will use data assembled from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* as a starting point to consider the denotative

⁷ For the topos of the beasts of battle in *Beowulf*, see, for example, Stanley 1966 and Harris 2006.

and connotative signification of the word *wyrm* in what Kenneth Sisam once called “*Liber de diversis monstribus, anglice*” (‘a book of diverse monsters, in English’) (1953: 96). In the next two sections, I will analyze the occurrences of *wyrm* in the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* to examine the text’s cultural landscape and also to consider the differences between this epistolary narrative and *The Wonders of the East*, another Old English text that immediately precedes the *Letter* in the manuscript. Afterwards, I will examine the use of the word *wyrm* in *Beowulf*. I will focus on the representation of the fire-spewing *wyrm* in order to demonstrate the peculiar nature of this monster and probably an even more peculiar nature of the man who fought against it. In the last section I will briefly turn to *Judith* and *The Passion of Saint Christopher* to consider the function of the word *wyrm* in hagiography and other religious writing.

Alexander and the snakes of India

Even though the word *wyrm* occurs multiple times in the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, it never signifies ‘worms.’ In fact, all of the occurrences of the word in this text refer to snakes except in one section where *wyrm* refers to *scorpiones* (‘scorpions’) both as a simplex and as an element of a compound (i.e. *wyrm-cyn*, lit. ‘worm-kin’) (Fulk 2010, 52). It is suggestive that the *Letter*, not unlike *Beowulf*, contains no genuinely entomological *wyrm*, even though the text presents a rich and varied landscape inhabited by diverse creatures. But the stated objective of this “purported letter of Alexander to his teacher Aristotle” is to inform the renowned philosopher “about the land of India ... so that your learning and acuity might add somewhat to the understanding of these novel things” (*be þæm þeod-londa Indie ... tō þon þæt hwæthwygo tō þære ongietenisse þissa nīura þinga þīn gelis and glēawnis tō geþeode*). In other words, the fictional letter of the great conqueror, which tells “outlandish tales of his life and exploits,” presents India as geography “to be wondered at” (*tō wundrienne*) (Fulk 2010: xiii, 34–7). From the perspective of a romantic adventurer exploring the Wild East, so to speak, worms and other ordinary insects are apparently not anything worth writing home about.

Reptiles seem to be a different matter altogether. When Alexander and his army, after marching through the inner part of India without a proper supply of water, finally reach “a certain very large lake” (*sumne swīde micelne mere*), they realize that they are not the only ones in need of “that sweet and fresh water” (*þæs swētan wætres ond þæs ferscan*) (Fulk 2010: 50–1). The above-mentioned scorpions, identified by the narrator as *wyrm-cynn*, are the first to arrive at their camp, and they

are followed by a series of other non-human visitors taking turns at regular intervals:

Dā æfter þon cwōman þær hornede nēdran *carastis* þæt nēder-cyn. Þā wæron ealle missenlices hīwes, forþon hīe wæron sume rēode, sume blace, sume hwīte. Sumum þonne scīnan þā scilla ond līxtan swylce hīe wæron gylðne þonne mon onlōcode. Eall þæt lond hlēoðrade for þāra wyrma hwistlunge, ond ūs ēac nōht lýtēl ege from him wæs.

Then after that there came horned snakes, the kind of snake called *cerastes*. They were all of various colors, for some of them were red, some black, some white. When observed, the scales of some shone and gleamed as if they were made of gold. All that region buzzed with the hissing of those pests, and we also had no little dread on their account (Fulk 2010: 52–5)

In this passage, the narrator uses four different expressions for the horned snakes. In the first sentence, he refers to them both by their generic appellations – *nēdre* ('snake') and *nēdercynn* (lit. 'snake-kin') – and by their particular type in Latin (*cerastes*). It is only in the last sentence that the narrator applies to them the word *wyrm*. It is important to note, moreover, that this is the first time snakes are identified as *wyrmas* in the *Letter*. Earlier, the narrator did mention snakes, but he invariably used the generic word *nēdre* for them. In the opening part of the *Letter*, for instance, he explains to his revered teacher that the purpose of his sending this document is to inform him "about the countless varieties of snakes and humans and wild animals" (*be þām unārīmdum cynnum nēdrena ond monna ond wildēora*) (Fulk 2010: 34–5). Even when he is warned by the locals about the danger involved in his plan "to see the interior of India" (*Indeum innanwearde tō gesēonne*), he calmly speaks of the precautions that he would have to take "against the various species of snakes and predatory wild animals in case we encountered them" (*wið þā missenlican cynd nēdrena ond hrīfra wildēora þy lās we on ðā becwōmon*) (Fulk 2010: 40–1). It is only when he actually casts his eyes on these multi-colored creatures by the lake of deep India that he applies the word *wyrm* to snakes.

I believe that this lexical switch to *wyrm* was triggered by the "no little dread" (*nōht lýtēl ege*) that Alexander and his army felt upon hearing the horned snakes' hissing (*hwistlunge*) that filled the entire land. The words *nēdre* and *wyrm* are synonyms, but their connotations are different: if the former is a general term for the species, the latter expresses the speaker's emotional response to the animal. In fact, the speaking subject may even choose this signifier in spite of his objective assessment of the signified. In the *Letter*, Alexander is fully aware that the *cerastes* "customarily" (*gewunelice*) sought the fresh water of the lake, and yet he and his army still "fought with those vermin and

struggled" (*wið þām wyrnum fuhtan ond wunnan*), piercing them with spears and burning their carcasses (Fulk 2010: 52–5). As implied by Fulk's use of the word "vermin" here, the Old English word *wyrm*, especially when referring to a reptile, seems to describe the animal from the speaker's perspective: this is a creature pestilential in the eye of the person who names it as such. In the *Letter*, Alexander and his troops are the intruders, whereas the reptiles – named *wyrmas* – that seek the only source of fresh water in the region live side by side with other non-human animals in this natural environment. Hence the horned snakes seem noxious only to the Greeks, when, in reality, these indigenous creatures, once having had their daily fill of water, "departed and did not attack us" (*gewiton ... þonon, ond ūre nō ne ēhton*). The *Letter* almost turns into a farce when Alexander, after the peaceful departure of the *cerastes*, begins to respond exactly in the same manner to the second group of snakes that have arrived next, expect that these *wyrmas*, being "more dreadful" (*egeslicran*) and "more amazing" (*wun-derlicran*), turn out to be actually very dangerous (Fulk 2010: 54–5).

In rendering the section on the second group of snakes, the Old English author of the *Letter* shows a predilection for *wyrm* over *nādre*, in that he even supplies the word when there is no corresponding word in the Latin. In the *Epistola*, Alexander concludes this section succinctly:

quorum pectora erecta cum trisulcis linguis fauces exercebant scintillantibus ueneno oculis; quorum alitus quoque erat pestifer. Cum his hora non amplius una debellauimus, .XXX. seruis et .XX. militibus amissis. (Orchard 1995: 211)

with their eyes gleaming poisonously, they maintained their breasts upright and spat from their mouths equipped with three-forked tongues; their breath was also lethal. We fought with them for no more than an hour, but we lost thirty servants and twenty soldiers.

While we may not be able to prove that this is the exact version of the *Epistola* used by the Anglo-Saxon author, the corresponding part of the Old English *Letter* is longer and more outlandish than the Latin, with the word *wyrm* playing a significant role to enhance this effect:

Hæfdon hīe þā wyrmas þrīe slite tungan, ond þonne hīe ēðedon, þonne ēode him of þy mūðe mid þy oroþe swylce byrnende þecelle. Wæs þæra wyrma oroð ond ēþung swiðe dēað-berende ond æterne, ond for hiora þæm wōl-beorendan oroðe monige men swulton. Wiþ þissum wyrnum we fuhton leng þonne āne tīde þære nihte, ond hīe þā wyrmas ācwealdon .xxx.tig monna þære fyrde, ond mīnra āgenra þegna .xx.

Those vermin had three slits of the tongue, and when they exhaled, out of their mouths with their breath came something like a burning torch.

The breath and exhalations of the pests were very deadly and venomous, and on account of their pestilential breath, many men died. With these pests we fought longer than one hour in the night, and the vermin killed thirty men of the troops, and twenty of my own officers. (Fulk 2010: 54–5)

In this passage, the translator uses the word *wyrm* four times, even though there is no word signifying ‘snake’ in the corresponding Latin passage. While the casualties reported to have been experienced by Alexander’s army remain exactly the same, the snakes in the Old English version are even more monstrous than those in the Latin: the snakes in the *Epistola* have shining eyes, whereas those in the *Letter* exhale fiery breath. In the Old English version, these snakes look somewhat like dragons, and the terror that Alexander has felt towards the snakes by the great mere does not seem to dissipate for the remainder of his expedition in India, as he continues to use the word *wyrm* in the remainder of the text (e.g. Fulk 2010: 58, 64, 72, 74).⁸

To Wyrm or not to Wyrm: the Assignment of Latin Serpens in The Wonders of the East

The analysis of the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* in the previous section has shown how the Latin word *serpens* and its synonyms may be rendered either to *nædre* or to *wyrm*, and, also, how the choice between these two Old English words depended on the Anglo-Saxon writer or translator’s interpretation of the context of each occurrence of the Latin word.⁹ In this section, I will use *The Wonders of the East* to consider briefly how the choice may also be influenced by the Anglo-Saxon writer’s interpretation of the register of the text as a whole. *The Wonders of the East* deals with topics similar to those of the *Letter*, including strange and monstrous creatures of the East and Alexander’s experience therewith. Fulk explains that the source text of the Old English *Wonders*, known as *De rebus in oriente mirabilibus*, was first “rendered from a Greek one sometime before the death of Isidore of Seville in 636, since Isidore used the Latin text as a source for his *Etymologiae*.” Fulk further points out that the “Old English is rather faithful to the Latin, with only minor omissions and errors” (Fulk 2010: xi). Given the faithfulness with which the translator of the *Wonders* has treated

⁸ For the general reception of the Alexander-legend in Anglo-Saxon England, see Orchard 1995: 116–39.

⁹ Roberts and Kay’s *Thesaurus of Old English* lists the simplex *slincend* and *snaca* under “02.06.07.01 Reptile (serpent, snake).” These Old English words are, however, relatively infrequent, and they are often used to gloss for *reptile* and *coluber*, respectively.

the Latin original, it is important to note that there is no occurrence of *wyrm* in the Old English *Wonders*. The translator would have had more than one opportunity to use *wyrm*, for the Latin text describes several monstrous snakes, including *corsiae*, which “have horns as large as rams have” (*habbað swā micle hornas swā weðeras*), and the snakes of Hascellentia, each having “two heads, of which the eyes shine at night as bright as a lamp” (*twā hēafdu, þāra ēagan scīnað nihtes swā lēohte swā blāc-ern*) (Fulk 2010: 18–19). Even though the horned *corsiae* and the shiny-eyed snakes of Hascellentia are not dissimilar to the *cerastes* and the lethal snakes of the *Epistola Alexandri*, respectively, the Old English *Wonders* consistently assigns the more generic Old English word *nādre* to these creeping creatures. Furthermore, the Old English *Wonders* mentions horrifying dragons, which are “one hundred fifty feet long” (*on lenge hundtēontige fōt-mæla lange ond fiftiges*) and “as thick as large columns” (*grēate swā stānene swēras micle*) (Fulk 2010: 22–3). As monstrous as such creatures may seem, the Anglo-Saxon translator consistently applies the word *draca* to them. The absence of the word *wyrm* in the Old English *Wonders*, I believe, has something to do with the expressed genre of the text. Unlike the Old English *Letter*, the Old English *Wonders* is structured more like a treatise objectively describing one marvel after another. Unlike the subjective first-person narrator of the former text, the third-person narrator of the latter text seems to keep a certain emotional distance from the contents of the text, even when he deals with such a potentially problematic topic as the inhumane way of obtaining gold dug up by giant ants, or Alexander’s murdering of boar-tusked women, “because they are obscene and disgraceful of body” (*forþon hȳ syndon æwisce on līc-homan ond unweorþe*) (Fulk 2010: 20–1, 26–9).

Wyrm in Beowulf

As mentioned in the introduction, there are twenty-two occurrences of the simplex *wyrm* in *Beowulf*, but none of them signifies “worm.” Of these twenty-two, once again according to the glossary in *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, twenty-one pertain to dragons, and only one is glossed as ‘serpent.’ And even this sole example of the serpentine *wyrm* seems to have a close association with dragons:

Gesāwon ðā æfter wætere wyrm-cynnes fela,
 sellice sæ-dracan sund cunnian,
 swylce on næs-hleoðum nicras licgean,
 ðā on undern-mæl oft bewitigað
 sorhfulne sīð on segl-rāde,
 wyrmas ond wildēor. (1425–30a)

Then they observed throughout the water many species of serpents, strange sea-dragons testing the waters, likewise water-monsters lying on cliff-ledges, such as often in the forenoon scrutinize a lamentable voyage on the sail-road, serpents and wild beasts. (Fulk 2010: 180–1)

Its juxtaposition with *wildēor* ('wild animals') makes it reasonably certain that *wyrmas* in 1430a are snakes. Hence the phrase *wyrmcynnes fela* in 1425b is also likely to refer to reptilian animals. The choice of *wyrm* here, rather than *nædre*, seems appropriate, since the description of this eerie scenery is given from the perspective of the bewildered Danes looking down on Grendel's mere to observe the water mingled with the blood of Hrothgar's beloved thane Æschere, who was abducted and brutally killed by Grendel's mother the night before. We may note, however, that *wyrmcynnes fela* ('many species of serpents') is followed by *sæ-dracan* ('sea dragons') in 1426a and *nicras* ('water monsters') in 1427b. Because both of these nouns are accusative like *wyrmcynnes fela*, the sea dragons and the water monsters are, syntactically speaking, either appositive phrases to or a variation on "many species of serpents": if the former, these monsters allow the numerous snakes to share their habitat; if the latter, they are regarded as sub-species of the snake-kind. This spatial or zoological proximity of the reptilian *wyrmas* to the full-fledged monsters reminds us of the transformation of the shiny-eyed snakes of the *Epistola Alexandri* into fire-spitting creatures in the Old English *Letter of Alexander*.

Proximity between snakes and dragons as species may be observed even in a single creature identified as *wyrm*: namely, the fire dragon of *Beowulf*. There is little doubt that Beowulf's bane is a dragon, for the poet identifies it as *draca* on many occasions.¹⁰ Furthermore, the behavior of this *wyrm* tends to give us the impression that it is one of the most dragon-like dragons in the history of Western literature: this creature "flies by night engulfed in flame" (*nihtes flēogeð / fyre befangen*, 2273b–4a); three hundred years are just a blink of an eye for this mythical creature (2278–81b); being the protector of a hoard (*hord-weard*, 2302b), it monopolizes the treasure in an earth cave for the benefit of none (2277b); and if a wretched man takes a single goblet from his proud collection, he would "spew fire" (*glēdum spīwan*, 2312b) to devastate the entire land for revenge. Despite these characteristics typical for the dragon-kind, at least according to our perception of this imaginary species, the third and last monster of *Beowulf* resembles a snake in more than one way: to name one, when emerging

¹⁰ The *Beowulf* poet also refers to the dragon of the Sigemund legend both as *draca* (892b) and as *wyrm* (886b, 891a, 897b). The poem does not contain the word *nædre*.

from the cave at the provocation of the old king, it quickly turns itself into the shape of a coil (*hring-boga*, 2561a). Some of the serpentine features found in the fire-dragon of *Beowulf* may not be entirely unexpected, for dragons, according to the *Etymologiae*, are considered a species of snake. Isidore henceforth places the dragon (*draco*) under the section on snakes (*de serpentibus*) and calls it “the largest of all snakes.” When he continues to mention the dragon’s small mouth, its narrow pipes, its ability to fly, and its habit of living in a cave, therefore, we may regard them as features specific to this particular sub-type of snake. But the fire dragon of *Beowulf* also exhibits a number of characteristics that should be specific, at least according to Isidore, to regular snakes:

[the dragon] has its strength not in its teeth but in its tail, and it causes injury more by its lashing tail than with its jaws. Also, it does not harm with poison; poison is not needed for this animal to kill, because it kills whatever it wraps itself around. Even the elephant with his huge body is not safe from the dragon, for it lurks around the paths along which the elephants are accustomed to walk, and wraps around their legs in coils and kills them by suffocating them. (XII.iv.4–5; Barney et al. 2006: 255)

This is not exactly how the fire-dragon assaults Beowulf. Instead of using its tail to lash him, it coils and slithers on the ground. It apparently does not wrap itself around its opponent, for Beowulf seems to be able to move his limbs throughout the fight, wielding Nægling (however ineffectively), holding his iron-shield, taking out a long-knife from his mail-shirt, and stabbing the *wyrm* to finish it off. And most importantly, Isidore specifically mentions that the dragon does not have its strength in its teeth or harm with poison. We know that *Beowulf*’s fire-dragon does both. When rushing at the hero, this hot and hostile creature

heals ealne ymbfēng
biteran bānum. Hē geblōdegod wearð
sāwul-drīore; swāt ȝðum wēoll. (2691b–4)

enclosed his entire neck in its bitter fangs. He was smeared with his life’s blood; the gore welled up in waves. (Fulk 2010: 262–3)

It is the “poison” (*attor*, 2715a) from the dragon’s “bitter tusks” (*biteran bānum*, 2692a), rather than its choking tail, that causes the demise of the hero. The world of *Beowulf* is filled with marvels, and the protagonist’s superhuman exploits are not the least among them; and yet he dies from a serpentine bite in the end. The poet takes advantage of the polysemy of *wyrm* to heighten this paradox – a paradox that lies at the very heart of *Beowulf*.

Wyrm and hagiography

In this last section of the essay, I will briefly consider the two overtly Christian texts in the *Beowulf* Manuscript: *The Passion of Saint Christopher* and *Judith*. Of these two, the former has no occurrences of the word *wyrm* at all. The absence is not surprising, since worms, snakes, and dragons are not a staple of hagiography, even though they may be used as a prop with which to propel the plot. In Ælfric's homily on the deposition of St Martin, for instance, a poisonous snake bites a boy, only to help prove the saint's inordinate power:

ƿā wæs ðær ān cnapa geættrod ƿurh næddran swīðe tōswollen. ƿurh ðæs wyrmes slege. unwēne his lifes. ac hē wearð āhred ƿurh martines hrepunge fram ðām rēðan attre. (CH II 34; Godden 1979: 295)

Then there was a certain boy who was poisoned by an adder and became severely swollen from the snake's attack, without any hope of his life; but he recovered from the horrible poison thanks to Martin's touch.

But in this text, as well as in other texts dealing with Christian subjects, a snake can never be mentioned without provoking the image of the fiend of the Fall. Thus the cure of the youth in this homily symbolizes the overcoming of the devil, with the saint acting *in imitatione Christi*.

In *Judith*, *wyrm* makes a cameo appearance immediately after the beheading of Holofernes. While the foul trunk of Judith's adversary is stretched out in his ornate tent,

gæst ellor hwearf
under neowelne næs ond ðær genyðerad wæs,
sūsle gesæled syððan æfre,
wyrnum bewunden, wītum gebunden,
hearde gehæfted in helle-bryne
æfter hin-sīðe. (*Judith*, 112b–17a)

the spirit moved off under a steep cliff and was sunk there, moored to misery ever afterward, trammled by snakes, tied by torments, cruelly made captive in hellfire after his exodus. (Fulk 2010: 306–7)

The passage is likely an addition made by the Old English poet, since such a soul's journey is not mentioned in the apocryphal Book of Judith (Chapter 13). Furthermore, the phraseology of this particular passage echoes with that of Old English poems dealing with eschatological themes. In line 115 of *Judith*, for instance, *wyrnum* alliterates with *wītum* ('tortures'); in *Christ III*, the words *wyrm* and *wīte* also occur in the same long-line to take part in the alliteration (*wrāpum wyrnum ond mid wīta fela*, line 1547). In *Judith*, Holofernes' soul reaches hell by moving "under a steep cliff" (*under neowelne næs*, 113a); in *Christ and*

Satan, hell is similarly said to be located “down under cliffs” (*niðer under næssum*, 134a), where *wyrmas* torment its captives (134b–5a).

It seems that hell lies outside the regular ecology of *wyrm*, since worms, snakes, and dragons often appear side by side in the landscape of hell in Old English religious verse. To go back to *Christ and Satan*, the infernal space described by the poet unambiguously accommodates dragons and snakes (*dracan and næddran*, 336a). So when he also mentions *wyrma þreat* in this context (335b), we may translate the phrase as “a throng of dragons and snakes,” “a throng of worms,” “a throng of dragons, snakes, and worms,” or, for that matter, a throng of creatures including or not including any of these three. In a place whose sole function is to torment the accursed, the exact types of the creatures named *wyrmas* may not be as important as the terror that they should strike in those who are consigned there.

Conclusion

The examination of the word *wyrm* conducted in this essay has served as a measuring stick with which to gauge the literary geography of the *Beowulf* Manuscript. The absence of ordinary worms in the entire codex, with a possible exception of the hell-scape in *Judith*, seems to comport well with the manuscript’s general predilection for monsters and things “monstrous” – a word etymologically connected with Latin *monstrum* (‘portent’) (see, for example, Cohen 1996: 4). Most of the texts included in the manuscript are set in the East, and as such the *Beowulf* Manuscript seems to derive much of its exotic quality from what may be called proto-Orientalism (see Momma 2013: 287). And yet, *Beowulf*, the only text in the codex that takes place in the (north) west, presents an even more extraordinary landscape in that it not only uses the word *wyrm* frequently but also does so to refer solely to dragons and aquatic reptiles that rub shoulders, so to speak, with monsters in an eerie mere. It is interesting that insofar as the use of the word *wyrm* is concerned, the Scandinavia of the heroic age imagined by an Anglo-Saxon Christian poet should look even more outlandish than Alexander’s India imagined by a Greek author from “the first or second century CE” (Fulk 2010: xiii). The absence of the entomological *wyrm* also implies that the cultural space of the Nowell Codex, unlike that of the Vercelli Book or the Exeter Book, is foreign to mature Christian civilization, in which one of the recommended methods of devotion was to meditate on worms devouring a body buried on consecrated grounds. Lastly, the world of the *Beowulf* Manuscript, despite the distance it takes from the mundane, still belongs to *mid-dangeard*. However exotic the place shown in each of the narratives in the codex may seem, it belongs to a region presumably reachable

by earthly travelers moving across the ground, whether it be India, Samos, Bethulia, Babylon, or Scandinavia. These are places locatable also on the *mappa mundi*, however peripheral, however close to the edge, where, in the imagination of the Anglo-Saxons, monsters lurked (see, for example, Mittman 2006). The two overtly Christian texts aside, the cultural space of the *Beowulf* Manuscript is a material one where even the conqueror of the entire world or the heroic protector of a glorious people must in the end succumb to poison and die a death that is both ordinary and eternal.

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Wulfstan, Episcopal Authority, and the *Handbook for the Use of a Confessor*

Stefan Jurasinski

This essay considers some questions raised by the assemblage of penitential texts known since Roger Fowler's edition of 1965 as "A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor" (and by other names in the years prior).¹ A particular (though not exclusive) concern in the following pages will be its possible relationship to Archbishop Wulfstan of York and with peculiarities of his thinking on matters of law and pastoral care. In spite of their importance to our understanding of the *Handbook*, these matters have received little sustained attention, though speculations about its authorship are traceable at least as far back as Benjamin Thorpe's edition of 1840, which said the following on its likely provenance:²

[R]eferences in the 'Modus Imponendi Poenitentiam' will at a glance enable the reader to perceive, that the whole is an abridgement of Ecgberht, the work apparently of a bishop (perhaps Dunstan) very sensitive with regard to the infallibility of his order, if such an inference may be drawn from the circumstance, that, in laying down the penalties for crime to be paid by each class of the clergy, he carefully omits mention

¹ In older scholarship, the text is typically referred to as the "Canons of Edgar" (as in Oakley 1923: 95–6) or the "Modus Imponendi Pœnitentiam," the title given as late as Raith's edition of 1933, where any association with the "Canons of Edgar" is repudiated (xxxviii). Raith's edition gives only sections III and IV of the *Handbook*.

² Thorpe 1840: I, xv–xvi. The other vernacular penitentials known to have circulated in Anglo-Saxon England are now called the *Scriftboc*, the *Old English Canons of Theodore*, and the *Old English Penitential*. The texts have borne these names only since Frantzen's studies. The *Scriftboc* and *Penitential* were earlier labeled the *Confessional* and *Penitential of Pseudo-Ecgbert*, respectively, while the *Canons* were assumed to be a recension of the *Scriftboc* and thus have seen little discussion in published scholarship until the last couple of decades. The assumed tie to Archbishop Ecgberht of York was based upon an incipit in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 190 (see below, n. 20), which cannot have referred to the *Penitential*, by all accounts a much later text. Ecgbert's authorship of the *Scriftboc* seems likewise rather improbable. But the incipit may attest to a tradition holding some of the *Scriftboc*'s provisions to have originated in the Northumbrian church, an impression corroborated by the greater presence of Mercian dialect features in this text and the *Canons* than in the *Penitential* and *Handbook*, as discussed in Ful and Jurasinski 2012. The preparation of ecclesiastical texts in English even at this early date cannot be ruled out; on the possibility that Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus "may have deliberately encouraged the use of written English," see Brooks 1984: 95–6.

of the bishop, who, in the Penitentials of Theodore and his translator Ecgberht, is usually placed at the head of the list.

Thorpe's observations about the concern of the text for maintaining the privileges of bishops remain a part of present-day commentary even if his attribution of the text to Dunstan fell flat.³ That Wulfstan is the more probable candidate has not been seriously questioned in the five decades since Fowler's edition attributed this text to the prelate.⁴ Yet the nature of Wulfstan's role in its preparation remains a matter of uncertainty, with even Fowler's arguments to this effect being notably cautious. To Fowler, evidence tying the text to Wulfstan was chiefly codicological: "The fact that the *Handbook* is found in manuscripts connected with Wulfstan is perhaps the strongest argument in favor of his having assembled the work" (7). The stylistic tests then being used to broaden the Wulfstanian corpus yielded little, in Fowler's view, when brought to bear on the *Handbook*.⁵ His concluding remarks on the subject could even be understood as retreating from claims of outright authorship.⁶

Something of Fowler's restraint persists in more recent commentary. Though some have been rather more sanguine about Wulfstan's role in composing the *Handbook*, even Catherine Cubitt, who "[f]inds] more numerous and more extensive indications of Wulfstan's style and vocabulary in the text than Fowler did," will only go so far as asserting that the *Handbook* "may have been *worked over* by the Archbishop himself" (2006: 54; my emphasis). Indeed, it may be that claims about Wulfstanian authorship are made more reservedly about this text than most attributed to the prelate over the past half-century.

That Wulfstan's role in composing the *Handbook* still may not be forthrightly asserted perhaps reflects the relative dearth of commentary tying this text to the circumstances of its time. While prior discussions seem to have wrung from codicology and stylistic tests nearly all they have to give, the contents of the *Handbook*, particularly its treatment of penance, have not seen much consideration. Fowler's edition,

³ For a more qualified assessment, see Frantzen 1983a: 140 n. 65.

⁴ Only Patrick Wormald seems to have doubted Wulfstan's role in its composition, though his arguments were never, as far as I know, pursued in detail: see Wormald 2014: 94.

⁵ "I do not think ... that the stylistic evidence is weighty enough: a stylistic case cannot be made for the whole of the *Handbook*, nor are we sure enough of the linguistic and theoretical validity of stylistic tests of authorship to place complete reliance upon them" (1965: 10).

⁶ "We might speculate that Wulfstan had the *Handbook* compiled (no more definite assertion of his hand in the compilation would be wise) to fill this need; that, in the spirit in which he provided the detailed *Canons* for the guidance of the secular clergy, he went further than his source, *Pseudo-Ecgbert*: giving not only a list of penances but a form of confession (for which precedents existed) and adding a guide to confessional procedure and notes on the judgment of the priest in prescribing penance" (1965: 12).

which remains standard, is no exception.⁷ While editions of the earlier vernacular penitentials featured ample commentary – much of which sought, sometimes misguidedly, to trace the sources used in these texts – Fowler’s offered little discussion of sources while refraining almost entirely from interpretive observations. Remarks on the debt of this text to prior penitentials in Old English and on its likely historical context are thus confined primarily to a pair of studies by Allen Frantzen authored in the early 1980s, as well as those in more recent publications, wherein the *Handbook* is one of many works considered. In these works, Frantzen suggests that the *Handbook* represents “an advance over earlier penitentials,” being perhaps the culmination of attempts in prior English compilations to free the confessor from reliance on Latin manuals.⁸ The latter, though attributed to famed English ecclesiastics of the seventh and eighth centuries, were effectively Frankish documents of penitential practice, leaving the Old English texts derived from them imperfect witnesses to pre-Conquest conditions (see Frantzen 1983a: 69-70). “Only with the ‘Handbook’,” Frantzen notes, “are we on new and decidedly English ground” (1983a: 139).⁹ To Frantzen, this reorientation toward English rather than Frankish models is most obviously manifest in the *Handbook*’s reliance on a prior vernacular text, the *Old English Penitential*, for its list of recommended periods of fasting and other remedies.¹⁰ The drastic reduction in the number of these “tariffs” is seen as meant to aid the work of the confessor-priest: “The ‘Handbook’ reduces the confessor’s margin for error by reducing the number of tariffs for him to choose among. By far the shortest of the three vernacular texts, it would therefore have been the easiest to consult” (1983a: 140). Frantzen’s fullest remarks on the relation of this text to its antecedents are worth quoting at length:

[The *Handbook*] contains only a fraction of the tariffs found in either the “Penitential” or the “Scrift boc,” and unlike them it does not seem to have been intended as a compendium of penitential decisions as well as a guide for the confessor. Its tariffs are devoted chiefly to murder, sexual offenses, and superstition. This narrowed scope – signaled by the elimination of penalties due bishops – makes the “Handbook” the most practical of the vernacular penitentials; it makes few assumptions about

⁷ I hope to edit the text anew in the coming years.

⁸ The fullest articulation of this view is in Frantzen 2007: 48: “By the late tenth century the Anglo-Saxons had not only begun to leave the older Latin sources behind but were adapting existing vernacular materials to new uses. [...] The Anglo-Saxons did not need Latin texts, it seems reasonable to conclude, and instead concentrated on vernacular versions that both revised and adapted older texts.”

⁹ “The three vernacular handbooks show increasing mastery of the form of the penitential, moving from the relative disorder of the ‘Scrift boc’ to the simplicity and clarity of the ‘Handbook’” (Frantzen 1983b: 55).

¹⁰ The *Old English Penitential* had drawn its fourth book in part from the *Scriftboc*: see Frantzen 1983a: 137.

the priest's knowledge of his duties as confessor and in fact gives nearly as much attention to advising him as to providing the tariffs themselves. (1983a: 140)

Frantzen's discussions of the *Handbook* and other Old English penitentials were probably the first to take them seriously. They represent a heroic break from the earlier practice of regarding these texts as mere translations of Latin exemplars, and bungled ones at that. Nonetheless, the time may now be ripe for the *Handbook* to be examined anew. In the following pages, particular attention will be given to the ways in which the *Handbook* envisages the administration of penance. While the novelty of this feature of the text has seen some emphasis in prior commentary, the character of the penitential measures assumed therein has yet to be fully described. Just how anomalous the *Handbook's* notions of ecclesiastical discipline are becomes evident when it is compared with other Old English penitentials. In particular, I have come to wonder if the *Handbook*, rather than bringing to fulfillment tendencies evident in prior vernacular manuals, may instead attempt a (rather eccentric) reorientation of penitential practice toward what is found in Carolingian materials – a pattern that, to some extent, is evident as well in the thinking of Wulfstan on the reconciliation of penitents.

Penance and the vernacular

The profound differences between the *Handbook* and earlier Old English manuals are apparent from the first words of the text. Its entire first section is a Latin *ordo confessionis*, making the *Handbook* the only Old English penitential not to have been composed entirely in the vernacular. Most commentary seems to give this *ordo* little consideration.¹¹ But some peculiarities of this first section may suggest the aims underlying the *Handbook's* preparation. Though indeed derived from the *Enlarged Rule of Chrodegang*, the *ordo* undergoes some substantial changes. While the portion of Chrodegang's *Enlarged Rule* employed by the *Handbook* begins by laying out the portions of the liturgical year during which laypersons and members of the secular and regular clergy were expected to give confession, this section is omitted in the *Handbook* and replaced with "Here begins the *ordo confessionis* of Saint Jerome on how the Christian ought to confess his sins" (*Incipit ordo confessionis Sancti Hieronimi qualiter confiteri debeat*

¹¹ The only discussion I am aware of is found in Frantzen 1983b: 48, where the Latin *ordo* is regarded as a poor fit with the other contents of the *Handbook*.

Cristianus peccata sua).¹² The *Handbook* thus appropriates the language of this portion of Chrodegang's *Enlarged Rule* only to shift its focus from monks and other clergy to the layman – and with a curious attribution of the prescriptions that follow to Saint Jerome. The text also omits to mention the instruction of the *Enlarged Rule* that during the three Quadragesimas “the faithful people should make their confession to their own priest” (*populus fidelis suam confessionem suo sacerdoti faciat*) – a significant choice, as we will see, given what is established in section IV of the *Handbook*.¹³

Why Jerome is made responsible for the *ordo* is a mystery that Fowler and subsequent commentators were perhaps wise not to pursue given the scarcity of evidence. The attribution is all the more surprising when one considers just how familiar Chrodegang's *ordo* was; not only had the *Rule* been translated into Old English prior to Wulfstan's episcopate, but it was copied in Continental and English scriptoria up to and after Wulfstan's lifetime.¹⁴ Why, then, assign the altered version of this text to Jerome? It may be of some relevance that the same is done in the introductory treatise that begins the *Poenitientiale Bigotianum*, whose incipit reads, “Jerome, a man of blessed memory, carefully admonished the pastors and teachers of the church that they should take note of the qualities of the faults of the sinners [...]”¹⁵ When it is borne in mind that many of Pelagius's views were known in the Middle Ages only through commentaries spuriously attributed to Jerome, we may wonder whether claiming Hieronymian authorship was one way of smuggling doctrinal writings of uncertain or controverted worth back into circulation (see Carlson 1975: 22). This speculation – and it must remain only that – perhaps receives further support from the fact that “when Paschasius Radbertus wrote a treatise on the Assumption of Mary for the nuns at Soissons, he cast his work in the form of a letter from Jerome to Paula and Eustochium” (Contreni 1995: 717). As the reception of the treatise shows, readers even in this period were

¹² Fowler 1965: 16, my emphasis. Cf. §32 of the *Enlarged Rule*, Bertram 2005: 201, 251.

¹³ Bertram 2005: 201, 251, my emphasis.

¹⁴ On the transmission of the *Enlarged Rule*, see Langefeld 1985: 18–20, 31–49, where it is noted that “the earliest manuscript evidence which we possess of the *Regula canonicorum* in Anglo-Saxon England comes from the time of the reign of King Æthelstan (d. 939) [...] The text preserved, however, is not that of Chrodegang's original text but that of the later enlarged version” (18). According to Langefeld, the *Enlarged Rule* was “translated into Old English towards the end of the tenth century,” though as she points out, “No manuscript containing the Old English translation has survived from that time” (65).

¹⁵ The Latin reads, “HIERONIMUS UIR BEATAE MEMORIAE ECCLESIAE PASTORES ET DOCTORES UT QUALITATES UITIORUM IN PECCANTIBUS ANIMADUERTANT DILIGENTER AMONUIT [...]”; ed. and trans. Bieler 1975: 198–9. In a note (255 n. 1), Bieler asserts that “The passage here attributed to St. Jerome is not found in the genuine works of this writer.”

sometimes wise to this trick.¹⁶ Thus we may wonder if the absence of the attribution to Jerome in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, otherwise the most complete witness to the *Handbook*, suggests it did not sit well with the copyist.¹⁷ Why Chrodegang's prescriptions (and perhaps, by implication, the materials that follow) would require such repackaging is something that all prior commentary has, to my knowledge, omitted to explain.

The penitential prayers in Old English that follow the brief *ordo* also may reveal more about the *Handbook* than most commentary implies. Frantzen asserts that this section of the *Handbook* "was an interpolation and not part of the compiler's original design" (1983a: 139–40). Its inauthenticity is suggested to Frantzen by its lack of relation to private confession and penance, assumed by Frantzen to be the concern of the remaining sections: "Without the confessional prayer the 'Handbook' is a complete, wholly adequate guide to private confession" (1983b: 47).

Further reasons to doubt the coherence of sections I and II issue, according to Frantzen, from their appearing in this order only in BL Cotton Tiberius A.iii; indeed, section II is omitted in all other manuscripts but N and D (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201). The arrangement of sections in each witness is shown by the following table from Fowler's edition:

Bx	C	D	N	X	Y
I	I	I*	I	V*	V*
III	III	III*	II	III	V*
IV	IV	II	III [N ¹]	V*	VI
V*	V	III*	III [N ²]		III*
		IV	IV*		V*
		V	V		III*
		VI			
		I			

Figure 12.1: Distribution of sections in extant witnesses (from Fowler 1965: 4).¹⁸

¹⁶ See Godden 2007: 5; Ripberger 1962: 8–9. Another text of broad influence at this time and "falsely attributed to Jerome" was *De vii ordinibus ecclesiae*, a source for "the concept of a correspondence between the seven ecclesiastical grades and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit": see Rabin 2015: 73 n. 38.

¹⁷ This manuscript is the only one to omit the attribution to Jerome. Effectively, it does so twice, as the Latin *ordo* occurs again in a different hand on p. 170, where it forms part of a series of formulas to guide the practice of confession.

¹⁸ Known witnesses to the *Handbook*, all of which date to the eleventh century, are as follows: Bx: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 8558–63 (2498), Ker 10; C: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 265, Ker 53; D: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, Ker 49; N: British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. iii, Ker 186; X: Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121, Ker 338; Y: Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 482, Ker 343. Catalogue numbers are those given in Ker 1957.

Such circumstances certainly warrant caution; any judgments about the *Handbook* must be made with an understanding of its extraordinary instability as a text. My own sense, the grounds for which will be established subsequently in this chapter, is that the interest of the *Handbook* in private confession and penance should not be assumed without some qualifications. As for the confessional prayer, my inclination is to see it as bearing a closer relation to the other penitential materials that make up the *Handbook*, though this judgment may be safely made only with respect to the version of the text appearing in BL Cotton Tiberius A.iii ("N"). A deliberate transition from section I to section II is, I think, evident at the outset of the latter. After the recitation of the Creed and an introductory formula to be intoned by the confessor requesting God's mercy for the penitent (*Preuaniat hunc famulum tuum, quaeso Domine, misericordia tua, ut omnes iniquitates eius celeri indulgentia deleantur; p[er] Iesum Christum etc.*)), the text shifts to English with language emphasizing the relation of what follows to what came before: "After this, let him arise humbly before his confessor" (*Efter þisum ārise ēadmōdlīce tō his scrifte [...]*) (Fowler 1965: 16–17).

The significance of this pairing of Latin and vernacular formulas is not to be overlooked and points to the intended coherence of sections I and II as arranged in this manuscript. In so knitting these sections together, one compiler of the *Handbook* may have assumed a role for the vernacular not otherwise apparent in Old English penitentials.¹⁹ In earlier penitentials, English is employed to aid the work of the priest unable to read Latin well, or so we are told in the incipit assigned the *Scriftboc* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College (CCCC) 190.²⁰ The version of the *Handbook* in N, however, shifts to English under different auspices. Its requirement that the penitent confess in English assigns the vernacular a role similar to what is evident in some Frankish sacramentaries of the ninth century. In these texts, it is assumed that the recitation of penitential formulae is best done *rusticis uerbis*.²¹ The *Handbook*, or at least this portion of it, thus shows a debt heretofore unacknowledged to penitential traditions attested across the Channel,

¹⁹ My own examination of Cotton Tiberius A.iii *in situ* confirmed the impression given by Fowler's edition and its list of variants; among witnesses to the *Handbook*, the version given in this manuscript seems thoroughly worked over, with a number of additions made in a hand different from that of the main scribe. So it is not impossible that the arrangement of constituent parts in this manuscript indicates particular care taken by the compiler.

²⁰ *Þās capitulas Ecgbýrht, Arcebisceop on Eoforwīc, āwende of Lēdene on Englisc, þæt þā ungelāredan hit mihton þe eð understandan.* Ed. Spindler 1933: 170.

²¹ See Hamilton 2001: 126, who describes as follows the penitential rite in the Romano-German pontifical: "The priest should first make sure that the penitent understands that by making a true confession God will remit his sins before formally awarding his penance. The penitent then confesses his sins in the vernacular: 'Deinde fiat confessio peccatorum rusticis uerbis.'" The Fulda sacramentary, she notes, contains a similar provision.

and may be understood, I think, as an attempt to write these into the current practice in England.

The clearest basis of comparison for this section of the *Handbook* is the *Old English Introduction*, an *ordo confessionis* entirely in the vernacular that precedes the *Scriftboc* in one manuscript (CCCC 190) and, in fragmentary form, the *Old English Penitential*. The *Introduction* is a jumble of rather heterogeneous materials. Some, such as a canon attributed by the text to Theodore, are of dubious descent and perhaps reflect Irish influence (Spindler 1934: 149). Its first chapter covers much the same ground as sections I and II of the *Handbook*, and does so with a greater emphasis on interrogation of the penitent with respect to the orthodoxy of his belief before confession.

It seems to me entirely possible that composition of the *Handbook* was undertaken in part to fill certain gaps in this portion of the *Introduction*. Section I of the *Handbook* offers much more detail regarding the display of sorrow expected of the penitent prior to confession, prescribing a developed ritual in place of the directive in the *Introduction* that the penitent prostrate himself before the confessor (*beforan him hine aþēnian*) and implore him with tears that he teach him the proper remedy for all that he had done against God's will (Spindler 1934: 170). Though the same prelude to confession is prescribed in section I of the *Handbook*, the penitent is to be understood here (Fowler 1965: 16) as prostrate before God, and his first address is not to the confessor but to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, beseeching that they intercede for him so that God may grant him the knowledge to give a complete confession of his sins (*intercedant pro se ad Dominum, ut Deus omnipotens dignetur ei dare sapientiam perfectam et ueram intelligentiam ad confitendum peccata sua*). The content in the *Handbook* is thus decidedly more theological than what is found in the *Introduction*, and this feature of the text – along with its elimination of the priest's role in confession – perhaps explains why section I is in Latin, a language many priests at this time could not be relied upon to understand. While the *Handbook* may in some general sense have been intended for the use of priests, some would not have been able to make full use of it without guidance from superiors, and all would have found their role in the penitential encounter a bit more circumscribed than was the case in manuals composed earlier. We will see in subsequent sections how these themes persist into the heart of the *Handbook*.

Public penance

After the confessional prayer described above comes a short section (III) dealing with the methods to be employed by a confessor in assigning remedies. These instructions perhaps lay the groundwork for section IV, which is drawn nearly verbatim from §I.12 of the *Old English*

Penitential (Raith 1933: 10–11). This portion of the *Handbook* mandates public penance for *hēafodleahtras* ('capital sins') before listing 40 brief penitential tariffs (likewise drawn, this time with modifications, from the *Penitential*). In the first part (Fowler 1965: 20), we are told that on Ash Wednesday each man within the shire who is defiled by capital sins (*mid hēafodleahltre besmiten bið*) shall approach the bishop's seat and declare his sins to him (*his sinna him gecyðan*). It is the bishop who then prescribes a remedy (*tæceð him dædbōte*); and those who are worthy of it are separated from the assembly of the faithful, returning only on the Thursday before Easter, where they receive absolution from the bishop before returning home (*and him þonne se biscop ofer singeð and absolutionem dēð, and hī swā hām hwyrfað mid þæs biscopes bletsunge siððan*). Nonetheless, the priest (*se sācerd*) shall eagerly consider with what fullness the penitent has pursued the remedy taught him by the bishop (*se dædbēta gebēt hæbbe þæt him getæht wæs*) and thereupon grant him pardon (*and swā him forgifnesse dōn*).

A number of things should be pointed out concerning this extraordinary passage, one of the few witnesses we possess to what public penance may have looked like in England should it have been practiced at all.²² The first is that it is, like much that we find in the *Old English Penitential*, a substantial departure from what is laid down in the presumptive source, §II.13 of Halitgar's penitential – perhaps more than is implied by remarks on this text by M. Bradford Bedingfield. The source had stipulated only that penitents, whether atoning for grave or minor offenses, are to be reconciled on the "fifth day before Easter" (*quinta feria ante Pascha*) and that for the remainder of the year the priest is to assign remedies and watch over the souls of his flock, being particularly alert to signs of despair (which may require absolution in advance of Holy Week).²³ There is no discussion in Halitgar of the bishop's role in hearing confessions and assigning penance, nor is any to be expected if we may take as normative those descriptions of the procedure for public penance likely to have circulated in the years before the *Handbook* was prepared. For example, in the first *Capitula* of Theodulf of Orléans (§36), it is stated that "[o]ne week before the beginning of Lent confessions should be given to the priests, penance received, quarrels reconciled, and all disputes settled."²⁴ For

²² The *Penitential of Theodore* (I, xiii, 4) notes the absence of public penance and reconciliation "in hac provincia," presumably Kent or Northumbria: for the text (306) and commentary (158–63) see Finsterwalder 1929.

²³ Migne 1844–64: 680 (vol. 105): *Sane si quis ægritudinem inciderit, atque usque ad desperationem devenerit, ei est ante tempus Paschæ relaxandum, ne de hoc sæculo absque communione discedat.*

²⁴ *Ebdomada prima ante initium Quadragesime confessiones sacerdotibus dande sunt, poenitentia accipienda, discordantes reconciliandi, et omnia iurgia sedanda* (Sauer 1978: 376; McCracken and Cabaniss 1957: 395).

Anglo-Saxon readers of this text, there can have been no question of *sacerdotibus* being a catchall term for “confessors,” as the Old English text follows Theodulf’s language in both the A and B versions, rendering *sacerdotibus* as *scifte* in A and *mæsseprēostum* in B (Sauer 1978: 377).

We find much the same situation assumed in one of the directives assembled by Regino of Prüm in the early tenth century. In this text, one of the fullest descriptions of public penance to survive from this period, the penitents are to present themselves to the bishop of the city before the doors of the church in such a manner that their faces and attire show forth their guilt (Wasserschleben 1840: 136–7). Here must be present (*adesse debent*) the deans and the archpriest of the parish, and with them “the witnesses, that is to say, the priests of the penitents, who ought to consider diligently their conduct” (*testibus, id est, presbyteris poenitentium, qui eorum conversationem diligenter inspicere debent*). It is only then that the bishop assumes a role in the rite:²⁵

Et secundum modum culpae poenitentiam per praefixos gradus iniungat: post haec in ecclesiam eos introducat, et cum omni clero septem poenitentiae psalmos in terram prostrates cum lacrymis pro eorum absolutione decantet.

And let the bishop enjoin penance according to the manner of the offense in the established degrees; after this let him lead them into the church, and with all the clergy let him sing for their absolution the seven penitential psalms with tears, prostrate on the ground.

That confession to a bishop was anomalous in the late Anglo-Saxon period has been further demonstrated by Angelika Schröcker, whose examination of confessional formulas in Old English affords only one such text in which “a bishop is addressed explicitly” by the penitent.²⁶ On the basis of this (admittedly slim) evidence, we may conclude that the *Penitential* and *Handbook* describe a version of public penance much more under episcopal authority than was the case in the ninth-century Frankish texts that sought its restoration – or even in a text copied assiduously before and perhaps during Wulfstan’s episcopate. Indeed, the distance between the bishop’s role in this rite as conceived of by the *Penitential* and these Frankish sources may be evident in the requirement of the former that the bishop give absolution “over” the penitents, which hints that he is not obliged (as in the prescription given by Regino) to prostrate himself with them in supplication.

²⁵ See the discussion of this rite in Mansfield 1995: 171–2.

²⁶ See Schröcker 2005: 347 n. 32. The language of the text in question (Conf 9.1) is as follows: *Ic andette þe, Drihten ælmihtig God, 7 sanctam Marian, þīnre haligan mōdor, 7 eallum haligum 7 þe, bisceop, ealle mine synna, þe ic earminge fram minre iugūde oð þas tid on gēan Godes geset-nyssse gefremede*. See Förster 1942: 14–17.

The rationale for public penance envisaged by the *Penitential* also differs from those assumed in Carolingian sources and precedents. In Halitgar, the requirement of public penance is occasioned specifically by the public and scandalous nature of the sin.²⁷ It has been pointed out that this understanding of penance, sometimes termed the “Carolingian dichotomy,” is apparent as well in some pre-Conquest English texts, as is unambiguously the case in the writings of Ælfric.²⁸ Though the *Penitential* and *Handbook* are often taken as further witnesses to the rise of public penance in late Anglo-Saxon England, or at least to attempts by elite clergy to revive the practice, it should be stressed that the rite as envisaged by these texts shows few continuities with the views outlined above. Rather than requiring public penance for public sins, the *Penitential* regards consultation with the bishop as a requirement for especially grave sins without specifying their public nature: 7 gif þā gyltas tō þām hefelīce bēon þæt hē <tō> bisceopes dōme tæcan þurfe, tæce him þider (Raith 1933: 9). That grave rather than specifically public sins are what the translator has in mind is evident in the requirement of the subsequent paragraph (paraphrased above) that those who are defiled with *hēofodleahtre* are to seek the bishop’s seat on the week before Lent.²⁹ That they are, according to the *Handbook*, to “announce” (*gecȳðan*) their sins to the bishop (the typical verb for confession of one’s sins is *andettan*) suggests a requirement not for some private confessional meeting – presumably, they have already had one with a priest – but rather the recitation of a formula, perhaps one similar to the text adduced by Schröcker.³⁰

The rather profound differences between this section of the *Penitential* and other witnesses to public penance in Anglo-Saxon England have yet to be appreciated. While Josef Raith is right in describing the arrangement envisaged by the text as one in which the priest is assigned merely a supportive role to the bishop in ferreting out vice (*Unterstützt wurde der Bischof durch den Priester*), his description of the “public penance” outlined in the *Penitential* may be short of the mark in saying that that the text prescribes this procedure for “notorious [and] great sins” (*offenkundige große Sünden*), a claim perhaps too reliant on remarks by Ælfric and in Carolingian penitential materials.³¹ As for the *Handbook*, the sins do not become public

²⁷ *Cuiuscunque autem poenitentis publicum et vulgatissimum crimen est, quod universam Ecclesiam commoverit, ante absidam manus ei imponatur* (Migne 1844–64: vol. 105, 180).

²⁸ See, e.g., the treatise edited in Fehr 1914: *Qui publice peccauerit arguatur et publica penitentia purgabitur. Et si hoc occulte fecerit et occulte ad confessionem uenerit, occulte ei penitentia imponatur* (243).

²⁹ Thus far I am in agreement with Bedingfield; see discussion on 231.

³⁰ See above, n. 26.

³¹ Bedingfield 2002 also seems to doubt whether references to *heafodleahtas* should be assumed to be the same as the “public sins” in Halitgar (231).

until they are “announced” to the bishop in the week before Lent. And it may be a mistake to assume that their nature is disclosed publicly even then. The penitents’ recitation of their sins in formulaic fashion and amid a list of other sins may have been meant to spare the penitent from reciting the particulars of his offense before an audience, and this aspect of the rite perhaps sees emphasis in the *Handbook*’s substitution of *gecȳðan* for the *Penitential*’s *andettan*, one of the few changes made by the former (Raith 1933: 11).

The role of the priest

With the bishop seemingly given sole authority over apportioning penances for *heafodleahtras* in the *Handbook*, what function can the brief list of tariffs have had? Frantzen has argued that this portion of the text was shortened to facilitate the work of the confessor-priests who used it: “Its brevity and wealth of instruction for the priest ... make it the most practical of the vernacular penitentials” (1983b: 48). Elsewhere, Frantzen asserts that the list of tariffs was pruned of what seemed extraneous matter so as to create “a more efficient collection ... in which sins of thought and other monastic vices were almost completely eliminated” (1983a: 149). Such remarks imply that this section was intended to function in the same manner as earlier collections of tariffs, and this is indeed the assumption of Bedingfield’s analysis, where this section is described as consisting of “prescriptions for private penance”; according to Bedingfield, “nowhere in the rest of these texts [i.e., the tariffs in the *Handbook*] is public penance referred to as a prescription or an alternative for any of the ‘heafodleahtras’ treated” (2002: 231). I quite agree with Frantzen that the *Handbook* limits to an unprecedented extent the sphere within which a confessor-priest may perform his duties. But I wonder if the restrictions on the activity of the priest may go a bit further. With the tariffs being limited “chiefly to murder, sexual offenses, and superstition” (Frantzen 1983a: 140), this section of the text – essentially all that survives of the tradition of vernacular penitentials in the *Handbook* – seems intended merely to complete the first portion of section IV, which outlines the procedures for sins so grave as to necessitate the episcopal imposition of penance. Here we should bear in mind that the division of the *Handbook* into six sections is an editorial expedient disguising the ways in which portions of this text were received and divided up by those who used them. What editorial practice may conceal is apparent in the version of this text occurring in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 265.

To the extent that the text suggests any section break, it occurs with the ornate initial in blue (*Dis is þus tō healdenne ...*) separating the

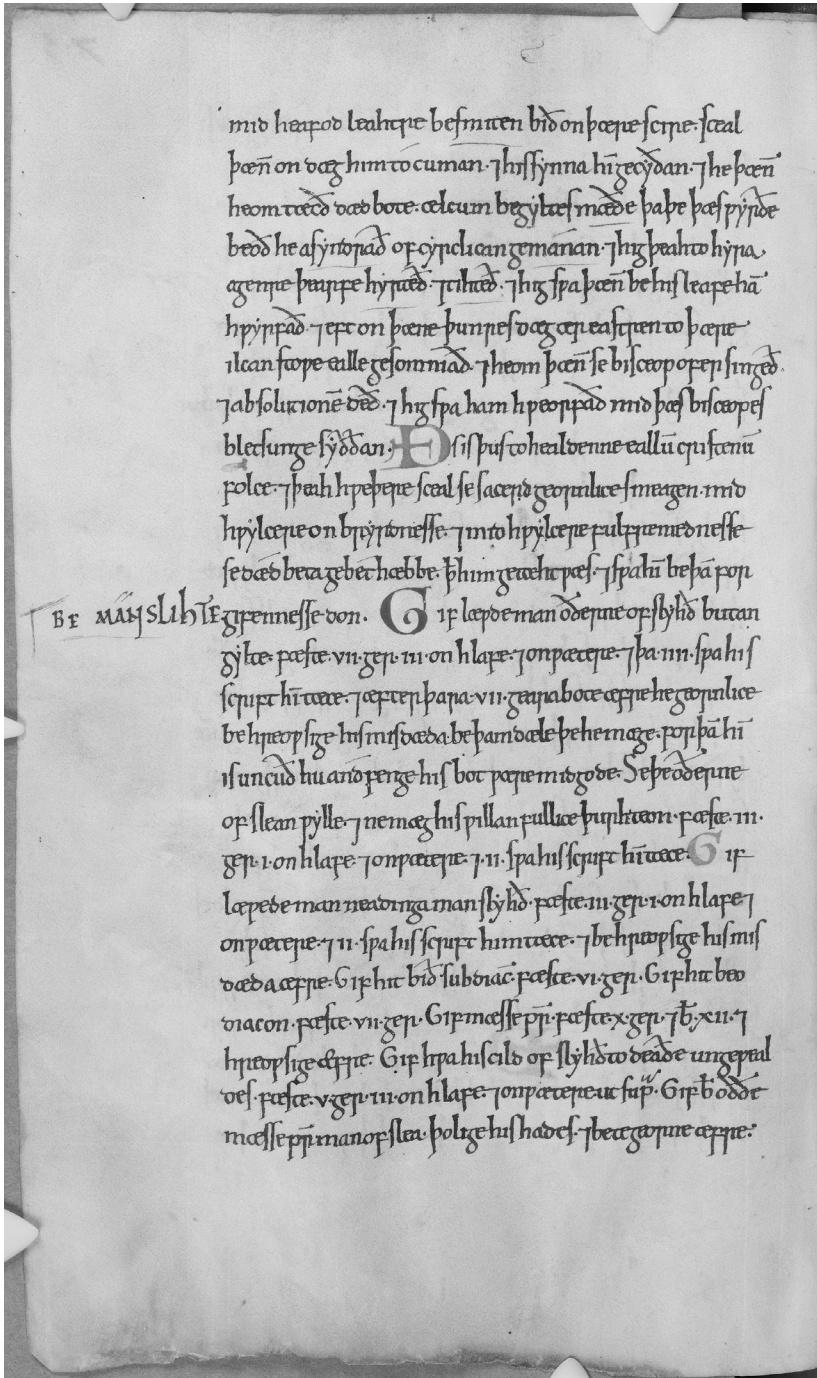


Figure 12.2: CCC 265, p. 74. Photograph: Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

bishop's assignment of penances from the subsequent obligation of the priest to ensure that each penitent has fulfilled his or her obligation; a subsequent red initial, along with a marginal rubric, signals the onset of the penitential tariffs. Both suggest that the list of tariffs in the *Handbook* was understood to assist the priest in fulfilling his responsibility, not to assign penances, but to give subsequent *forgifnesse* to the penitents who have announced their grave sins to the bishop prior to Lent at the prompting of the priest and who have received absolution from him on Maundy Thursday.³²

That the concern of the list of tariffs is specifically with those *hēafod-leahtras* for which penance has been assigned by the bishop is perhaps more evident in the fact that all but one prescribe a period of penance of a year or longer. Penance of this length are required for *hēafodleahtras* in the *ordo* preceding the *Scriftboc* (Spindler 1933: 172 [§I.c.o]): "We read in the Penitential that one should perform penance for great sins for a year or two or three on bread and water, and for the lesser sins for weeks or months" (*Wē ræddon on ðām Penitentiale þæt man sceolde dōn dædbōte for hēafodlicum gyltum gēar oððe twā oððe þrēo on hlāfe and on wætere, and be ðām læssan gyltum wucan oððe mōnað*). No requirement of public penance is made in this section of the *Handbook* because public penance, or rather the peculiar variety of it we find in the *Penitential*, has already taken place, and the canons here outline the aftermath for a penitent who has sinned so gravely as to require this special procedure. That the tariffs were meant mainly to aid the priest in carrying out the penances assigned by the bishop goes far toward explaining the omissions noted by Bedingfield of features one would expect of a manual of private penance.

The fact that the list of tariffs, when it arrives, occurs only as part of a battery of instructions for confessors suggests that what precipitated the composition of the *Handbook* was a sense, not that prior vernacular collections were foundations to be built upon, but that penance should proceed along very different lines from what is envisaged in these collections. The earliest collections, it should be noted, lack authentic prefatory material, the *Scriftboc's ordo* (conventionally labeled the *Old English Introduction*) being added only at a later stage of the text's transmission (see Frantzen 1983a: 135). The presence of these instructions

³² In discussing rites for public penance generally, Mary Mansfield (1995: 172) noted that the absolution given by the bishop was in no sense final, as many of the penitents participating in this rite might be expected to do so for years according to the gravity of their offense: "Regino expects penitents who have already undertaken the multiyear expiations – what are later described as the *carena* – to appear every year alongside the new public penitents on Ash Wednesday, and presumably on Maundy Thursday, too. [...] He [the bishop] does not pronounce a final absolution in the technical sense; the sinner is freed neither from the guilt (*culpa*) incurred by his offense nor from the need to complete his satisfaction."

surrounding the tariffs, I suspect, reflects the thinking of a compiler who did not trust the secular clergy very much to hear confession and assign penance and sought as much as possible to restrict their role in such exchanges. Its chief concern – one that distinguishes the text from all prior vernacular penitentials – is with shoring up episcopal authority over penance. This tendency of the text has, as we have seen, already been noted by others. Where I am compelled to differ from established views is in my sense that these concerns result in a text quite removed from those that came before it, one composed entirely to accommodate the rather peculiar penitential regime outlined in the *Penitential*.

Wulfstanian authorship of the Handbook

We may now turn to the question with which this essay began. Should the *Handbook* be attributed to Wulfstan? It should be said at the outset that I cannot pretend to offer some definitive solution to this question. And it is, perhaps, the wrong question to ask, since the portions of the *Handbook* in question are entirely derivative. Fowler's judgment on this question, as has been noted, is quite cautious; he detects some of Wulfstan's stylistic mannerisms in section III, and allows that sections "V and VI, which, like III, are subject to no external stylistic constraint, have many details and one or two whole sentences which are reminiscent of Wulfstan" (9). A list of such phrases and sentences follows; but even these do not leave Fowler fully persuaded (10).

Where does this leave the question of Wulfstan's authorship? I would suggest that the foregoing sections of this chapter do permit a closer correlation than has heretofore been thought possible of the concerns of the *Handbook* with what are known to have been Wulfstan's views on both penance and the status of the secular clergy. An assumption that priests were inadequately trained and in need of close episcopal supervision runs through a number of the prescriptive texts now attributed to the prelate, as is the case for the *Canons of Edgar* and (somewhat tentatively) the *Northumbrian Priests' Law*.³³

As for his views on penitential practices, we know from his homilies that Wulfstan favored the introduction of public penance, though his language does not quite match that of the *Handbook* (see Bedingfield 2002: 223–4, 235–5 and *passim*). The language of II Cnut 54.1, however, offers a closer, and heretofore unrecognized parallel, to what is established in section IV of the *Handbook*. This clause, derived from the *Old*

³³ On the *Northumbrian Priests' Law* and its authorship, see Rabin 2015: 197; on the *Canons of Edgar*, see Fowler 1972: xxvi–xxxiv.

English Penitential, shows some of the same habits of mind I have suggested are evident in the *Handbook*:

<i>Old English Penitential</i> II.9 (Raith 1933: 21)	<i>II Cnut</i> 54.1 (Liebermann 1903–16, I, 348; Robertson 1925: 203)
Se man ðe riht-æwe hæfð 7 ēac cyfese, ne sylle him nān prēost hūsł ne nān gerihto þe man cristenum mannum dēð, būtan hē tō bōte gecyrre; 7 gif hē cyfesan hæbbe 7 nān riht-æwe, hē <āh> ðæs tō dōnne swā him geðincð; wite hē þeah þæt hē bēo on ānre gehealden, bēo hit cyfes bēo hit æwe.	7 se ðe hæbbe rihtwīf 7 ēac cifese, ne dō him nan prēost nān þæra gerihta, þe man Cristenum men dōn sceal, ærþām hē geswīce 7 swā dēope gebēte, <u>swā bisceop him tæce</u>, 7 æfre swylces geswīce.
“He who has a legitimate wife and also a concubine: let no priest give him the Eucharist nor any of the rites given to Christian men, until he turn to penance; and if he has a concubine and no lawful spouse, he may do what seems [best]; let him know, however, that he will be bound to one, whether it is the concubine or the spouse.	“And if anyone has a lawful wife and also a concubine, no priest shall perform for him any of the offices which must be performed for a Christian man, until he desists and makes amends as thoroughly as <u>the bishop shall direct him</u>, and ever afterwards desist from such [evil-doing].”

Comparing these two clauses, we can see that Wulfstan has transferred to the bishop what had been (in the source) the priest’s responsibility for discipline in this matter. This clause from Wulfstan’s legislative prose evinces with the *Handbook* a desire for a more interventionist episcopacy than is assumed in earlier vernacular penitential texts. Public penance, given its status as the domain of bishops, was a major route toward achieving this end, perhaps more than we typically imagine.

Whether the *Handbook* had much of an effect on pastoral care in late Anglo-Saxon England seems unknowable. The approach to pastoral care outlined in the *Handbook* was probably impractical and a tough sell to the priests who made up its likely readership, which may explain why its provisions had to be presented as descending from Jerome. As we know, Wulfstan was ever occupied with guarding and expanding the privileges of his clerical order, often explicitly at the expense of priests. And so it may be because of his efforts that this last of the penitentials resembles its predecessors so little as to be hardly a penitential at all.

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Some Observations on *e*-caudata in Old English Texts

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It is not a revelation to observe that modern editorial practices obscure many features of the manuscripts that preserve Old English texts. Word division, word spacing, punctuation, capitalization, emendation (even when well justified), and the like construct an alternate text, different in many striking ways from the texts found in manuscripts. But the orthographical variation found in manuscripts is almost always preserved in the standard scholarly editions of Old English texts – conservative editorial principles hold that unusual spellings are not construed as errors (and therefore subject to intervention) in the absence of, as Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008: cxc) suggest, “a high degree of linguistic improbability”; spelling normalization may be a feature of classroom grammars and other beginner’s texts, but only the most obvious of scribal errors usually compels a modern editor to offer an emended spelling. But one form of spelling variation that is often normalized even in modern critical editions of Old English texts is scribes’ use of *ġ* (sometimes called “cedillated-*e*” or “*e*-caudata”), and the relative invisibility of the graph in our edited texts has no doubt disabled some potentially instructive commentary on a small aspect of scribal behavior.¹

Of course, scribal behavior in spelling may be conditioned in two broad ways. The first of these, naturally, is linguistic in nature. As Fulk says in his *A History of Old English Meter*, “The assumption of a certain amount of phonological significance to spelling is inevitable, since most conditioned variations have no reasonable orthographic explanation for their conditioning” (1992: 47). The second broad condition for scribal spelling is non-linguistic in nature: spelling may be influenced by “a written language system” that has “nothing to do with spoken language” (Parkes 1994: 24). At the same time that Fulk’s *A History of Old English Meter* powerfully demonstrated the linguistic

¹ Hogg’s (1992: 14) dismissal of any significance of *ġ* reflects a general attitude toward interest in the graph in scholarship: “The distinctions [between *ae*, *æ*, and *ġ*] are probably purely orthographic, ... and hence it is preferable to transcribe all three as <*æ*> unless paleographic considerations are of importance.”

meanings of Old English poetic texts through the application of rigorous philological methods to the interaction of language and meter, D.G. Scragg could urge “that students of Old English should not be blinded by the prescriptions of linguists” since “[h]owever poorly spelling variation charts developments in ... phonology, it gives ample evidence of scribal habits, manuscript relations, scriptorium practices and the development of a formal written language” (1992: 348). This paper charts a broad, corpus-based survey of *e*-caudata in Old English texts and gives some consideration to possible uses of the graph as a reflex of spoken language and written language, although, as will be demonstrated below, the most obvious conditioning for the use of *ɛ* surely belongs to textual circumstances owing to the graph’s origin and development in early medieval Latin.

But explanations of the origin, development, spread, and use of *e*-caudata in early medieval Latin have been quite meager and rather thinly spread across more than a century of scholarship, as has commentary on the borrowing and use of *e*-caudata in a number of medieval vernaculars, including Old English. On the situation in Latin, most simply observe, as Bischoff (1990: 122), that *e*-caudata emerged in pre-Carolingian Europe for the diphthong *ae*, progressively coming to represent the diphthong until its displacement by *e* in medieval Latin orthography of the twelfth century and later. For Old English, Campbell only observes that the symbol *ɛ*, used in some modern editions, represents a “much attenuated” *a* in the *æ* ligature found in some manuscripts (1959: 17). Ulysse Robert (1895) suggested that *ɛ* developed directly from the ligature of *a* and *e* in diphthongal spellings in Latin uncial manuscripts of the seventh century. Most recently, Carrie E. Beneš (2003) has extended Robert’s observations from a century earlier through her examination of the facsimile images in *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (Lowe 1934-71, hereafter *CLA*), and, contra Robert, she demonstrates that *ae*, *æ*, and *ɛ* spellings can all be found in late seventh- and early eighth-century manuscripts. She suggests that the dissemination of *ɛ* followed Mediterranean missionaries, since the earliest attestations of the graph appear in manuscripts from Italy and Spain, to Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England, where its original uncial use was extended locally to Insular scripts, which then found their way to the continent, taking *e*-caudata with them, through the work of Irish and Anglo-Saxon evangelists. Beneš also theorizes that *ɛ* was most common in “bookhands of middle-range formality” (2003: 21). Her efforts have certainly filled in the broad contours of the origins and dissemination of the graph but leave much to be discovered about local and vernacular contexts of *ɛ*, and her method of examining the plates found in *CLA* is, as she says, quite inexact – demonstrating the difficulties of trying to study *ɛ* in a broad scope – since “[e]ach facsimile in *CLA* shows only a small portion of the text for each manuscript”

(2003: 6). For example, British Library, Royal 2.A.xx is dated by Lowe to the second half of the eighth century – within the range of pre-ninth-century manuscripts investigated by Beneš – but the plate displayed for the manuscript in *CLA* (vol. II, no. 215) shows partial images from two leaves, 11v and 17r (with a focus on the decorated initials found there), that lack *ę*, although the manuscript preserves it elsewhere thirty-one times – in, for example, *demonium* (fol. 3r/4), *celum* (fol. 3v/14), *secula* (fol. 17r/11, out of frame for the image of 17r in *CLA*), *sepe* (fol. 22v/13), and *niçene* (fol. 47r/20) – where it appears mostly for unligatured *ae* (e.g., *caeli*, fol. 15r/4) and rarely for *e* (e.g., *secula*, fol. 17v/19). But the methodological shortcomings in Beneš's essay are completely venial because, while the plates in *CLA* offer only small samples of the manuscripts that they represent, there really is no better alternative to what *CLA* offers in terms of geographical and chronological scope in a single source. So while there are large gaps in the coverage of manuscripts in Beneš's study of the graph, her essay does provide a solid place to begin and registers the most extensive commentary on the subject of *e-caudata* in the Latin west that exists.

Problems of coverage also beset study of the graph's use in Old English texts, though the size of the corpus in play is, of course, considerably smaller than the size of the Latin corpus of the early Middle Ages. Even with a powerful research resource like the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (hereafter *DOEC*), tracking down every possible instance of *ę* is not within reach: the Corpus originally had to use *æ* for all instances of *e-caudata* as a concession to the project's older computing capabilities, so restoring *ę* to the Corpus has mostly been a function of the ongoing process of writing entries for the *Dictionary of Old English*; furthermore, the editions on which the Corpus is based often emend *ę* to *æ*, including through silent emendation.² So even in the light provided by the *DOEC*, editorial decisions about scribal alterations and textual cruces may well consign many examples of *ę* to *apparati critici* and therefore require individual variant word searches in the *DOEC*, which may still not indicate emendation. For example, the manuscript text of *Beowulf* contains three cases of forms of *e-caudata* (*healreced* 1981a, *bēl* 2126b, and *fæðmīę* 2652b),³ although, following many printed editions of the poem, the text used in the *DOEC* only notes *e-caudata* in *Beowulf* in variant spelling searches and shows these forms in the text with *e* (1981a and 2625b) and *æ* (2126b) – and only in *bæl* do angled brackets indicate emendation. So searching for *ę* in *Beowulf* with the *DOEC* returns no results; unless one is already familiar with the manuscript variants of these forms from

² The uncertain coverage of *ę* in the *DOEC* has been confirmed for me in a personal communication by Stephen Pelle, Co-Editor, *Dictionary of Old English*.

³ There is also a hook under *æ* in *sæcce* in 1989a.

elsewhere, the *DOEC* conceals *ę* from the curious. The shape of the caudae found in the *Beowulf* manuscript (mainly with the tail in each a slanted thin stroke finished with a horizontal broad stroke) is unusual compared to those in Old English manuscripts of the same period that I have seen – cf., for example, the more common closed loop of the cauda in *wegas* in *Genesis* 119 or the bolt-shaped stroke under the final *e* in *Assirię* in *Genesis* 232 of the Junius manuscript.⁴ The caudae in the examples in *Beowulf* look like additions by the second scribe: they appear in a lighter color ink than that which the main text is in (and, in 1981a *healreced*, with *sīde* also inserted by the second scribe above the line).⁵ Fulk notes that the caudae in *healreced* and *bēl* (2126b) alter “Anglian or poetic spellings to West Saxon ones,” while the hook under *æ* in *sæcce* (1989a) is “simply puzzling” and the form *fæðmię* (2652b) “would be a remarkable archaism” for its final vowel (2005: 197). Fulk further reasons that, since these insertions (including the non-alliterating insertion of *sīde* at 1981a) do not improve the text, the second scribe must have been making them without the exemplar, so “[i]t is therefore probably best editorial practice not to accord textual authority to either *side* or the hooks” (2005: 197). This is, of course, very sound editorial thinking, since the range of audiences of a modern edition calls for a construction of the manuscript that aids wide use of the text – preservation of unusual spellings of dubious textual authority and implausible linguistic meaning do not generally support wide use of a medieval text by students, historians, folklorists, and other non-specialists in the minutiae of medieval manuscripts.

But we might wish to explore the question of what Anglo-Saxon scribes were doing when they used *e*-caudata in Old English texts – even when not accorded textual authority through standard editorial protocols – and our modern editions, in their aim to satisfy the needs of wide audiences, make this task rather more difficult by replacing *ę* with *æ* and *e*, even when their *apparati critici* dutifully record the manuscript variant for each instance. Nevertheless, the texts used as the basis for the *DOEC* record *ę* often enough that it can be used to capture a great many instances of *e*-caudata in Old English texts, if not every example in the manuscripts. Accordingly, it is possible to take a broad corpus-based approach to *e*-caudata in Old English texts using the *DOEC*, with the cautionary stipulation that many possible instances of

⁴ These instances of *e*-caudata and others can be viewed through the Early Manuscripts at Oxford University Web site, <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msjunius11>.

⁵ See the critical apparatus in Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 73. View the examples of *e*-caudata in the *Beowulf* manuscript at BL 176v/4, BL 197v/20, and BL 191v/19 at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_vitellius_a_xv_fs001r. Also see the images and comments in Kiernan 2011.

ȝ in Old English texts have fallen outside the editorial protocols of the DOEC, effectively making them invisible to users.

The broadest view of *e*-caudata in Old English texts is the absolute number of occurrences of the graph and its frequency using the arrangement of texts found in Cameron 1973, which formed the basis for the *Dictionary of Old English*:

Table 13.1: Occurrence and frequency of *e*-caudata in DOEC

Group	number of occurrences	frequency
Poetry	69	2572:1
Prose	682	3121:1
Interlinear Glosses	1007	695:1
Glossaries	110	242:1

In terms of number of occurrences, *e*-caudata is rarest in Old English verse texts; I can find sixty-nine examples of *ȝ* in Old English verse by searching the DOEC, examining the *apparati critici* of standard editions, and checking the shapes and legibility of cauda in images of the manuscripts whenever possible. Since Old English verse comprises a rather small body of texts that can almost always be studied in good modern editions as well as in high-quality print, microfiche, or digital facsimile editions, locating and studying examples of *e*-caudata in verse are relatively straightforward matters. For example, the DOEC records the form *gespræce* in *Genesis* 661b although the manuscript clearly reads *gesprece*, where the cauda on the second *e* is a fully articulated closed loop in the hand of the scribe of the main text – it does not appear to be an addition or a correction, so according scribal authority to *gesprece* is incontestable while granting textual authority to *gespræce* is only debatable. A variant word search for *gespræce* in the DOEC does not list *gesprece*, but a search for *gesprece* links to *Genesis* 661b *gespræce* (without angled brackets indicating emendation). In effect, one must often already know about manuscript *ȝ*-spellings to find their variants in the DOEC. But conversely, and somewhat confusingly, the DOEC preserves manuscript *wegas* in *Genesis* 119a, even though *e*-caudata in both forms is a variant for *æ*. Both forms have etymologically long stressed vowels represented in West Saxon spelling with *æ*; the caudae in each form appear identical and fully articulated in the hand of the scribe of the main text. That the DOEC treats these examples (and many others) differently is, again, simply an accident of the history of the resource's compilation, but it means that tracking down lacunae in the coverage of *e*-caudata in the 2.1 million word corpus of Old English prose texts is not practical. Prose texts – about 70 percent of extant Old English by word count – impose serious hardships on any effort to track down every possible example of *e*-caudata, especially in a brief

study of this scope. However, it seems only practical and reasonable to me to rely on the results of searching for *ƿ* in the *DOEC*, bearing in mind, of course, that doing so inevitably understates the number of examples that could be found in manuscript readings. Even so, the *DOEC* produces results for some 682 examples of *ƿ* in Old English prose texts. The relative frequency of *ƿ* in Old English prose is somewhat smaller than that found in verse – about one example per 3,121 words – but, of course, the size of the corpus of Old English prose texts is approximately twelve times greater by word count than that for verse texts. The limited distribution of *ƿ* in Old English prose inhibits vigorous hypothesizing about its use, but 275 of the 682 examples of *ƿ*-spellings in Old English prose occur in just one text, the earliest surviving copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Parker Chronicle (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173) (Bately 1986). But more than half of the 275 *ƿ*-spellings in the Parker Chronicle are personal names, with, naturally, forms of *Ʒlfred* being the most frequently attested. Place names, like *Agēlesþrep* and *Tēmeseforda*, also feature prominently in the *ƿ*-spellings. But examples of *e*-caudata in other versions of the Chronicle are relatively rare: seven forms in Chronicle C (British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.i, written at Abingdon in the eleventh century); four forms from Chronicle D (British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.iv, written at Worcester in the eleventh century); seven forms in Chronicle F (British Library, Cotton Domitian A.viii, written ca. 1100 at Christ Church, Canterbury); and eighteen forms from Chronicle E, the Peterborough Chronicle (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 636, written in the twelfth century). We might reason, then, that *ƿ*-spellings obtain in greater numbers in older texts, and, indeed, there is some additional evidence, as we shall see, to support the observation that *e*-caudata in vernacular writing in Anglo-Saxon England occurs mostly before the mid-eleventh-century date of the majority of the extant manuscripts. But after the preservation of *ƿ*-spellings in the Chronicle, the Old English prose texts use the graph rather sparingly. Only the first series of *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies* (Clemoes 1997), Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (Miller 1890–8), and the Old English *Martyrology* (Rauer 2013) appear to use *ƿ* more than a small handful of times. In *Ælfric*, *ƿ*-spellings are preserved in fifty-three words in the first series of *Catholic Homilies* (out of slightly more than 100,000 words), and only three forms appear more than twice: *ƿcan/ƿce/ƿcum* (six times); *cwƿeð* (three times); and *scƿeþ* (two times).⁶ The graph appears in very small

⁶ The more than thirty manuscript versions (in complete or fragmentary form) of *Ælfric's* first series of *Catholic Homilies* makes accounting for the *ƿ*-spellings identified here somewhat difficult. I have used Clemoes (1997) to confirm that most of the *ƿ*-spellings come from readings in British Library, Royal 7 C.xii and from Cambridge, University Library Gg.3.28.

numbers in other Ælfrician works (though never in his second series of *Catholic Homilies*), including in one form only in the *Lives of Saints*. In the Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, nineteen *ē*-spellings occur mostly for *æ*, as in *Helendes* and *ārfestnesse*, but it also occurs in other positions (like *æfestan* for *æfestan* and *ȝode* for *ēode*), as well as in unstressed syllables (as in *geþwæriȝ* and *mynster*). The Old English *Martyrology* preserves forty *ē*-spellings, but almost half occur in foreign personal names and place names, like *Ualeriȝ*, *Alexandree*, and *Apuliȝ*. Where the graph occurs in English words in the *Martyrology*, most of the remaining examples are in function words, like *sȝ* and *þȝ*, which leaves only a small selection of uses in lexical words, like *wȝ* (three times) and *deg*.⁷ And a number of charters preserve *e-caudata*.⁸ All in all, the high-altitude view of *e-caudata* provided by the *DOEC* is of a very sparse landscape.

But the greatest number of examples of *e-caudata* – and the place where the graph affords the most interesting observations – by far occurs in Old English glosses, according to the *DOEC*. More than half of these examples occur in the interlinear glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels and the Rushworth Gospels. The Latin–English glossaries in part D in the *DOEC* record only 110 examples of *ē*, but, with the smallest group of texts by word count, the Latin–English glossaries still mark the highest relative frequency of *ē*. Consider, for example, the Second Corpus Glossary (Hessels 1890), which has seventy-two Latin forms with *ē* alongside thirty-one Old English forms with *ē*, about one example of *e-caudata* per seventy-eight Old English words. As is usually the case in Old English texts that make some use of the graph, it is rather difficult to identify a pattern. For instance, the glossary records both of the forms *nehtȝale* and *naectȝale* for *lūscinia* and *lūsciniū*, respectively. While the use of *ē* mostly stands as a simple alternate for *æ*, as in *blȝd* for *blæd* 'blaze', it also appears for other vowel spellings, like *gemȝgan* for *gemengan*. *E-caudata* also occasionally appears in the Corpus Glossary in positions which may be indicators of dialect, such as *ȝȝces* for West Saxon *ȝȝaces*, where *æ/ē* spellings for *ēa* > Germanic *au* suggest Anglian smoothing.⁹ The graph also appears for the vowels of unstressed syllables in *wilȝe*, *ātȝe*, *sonȝe*, *bēodbolȝe*, *ābundȝen*, *ōslȝe*, *plūȝȝe*, *braecȝȝe*, and *hospetȝȝe*, which could be a signal of the manuscript's relatively early eighth-century date. Similarly, the

⁷ Of the six medieval manuscripts preserving parts of the *Martyrology*, only three preserve *ē*-spellings, and all but three of them occur in British Library, Cotton Julius A.x, the most complete version of the text.

⁸ The boundary clauses in Latin charters with *ē*-spellings are (using their Sawyer numbers) 488, 553, and 879. The vernacular charters with *ē*-spellings are 1098, 1211, 1280, 1296, 1440, 1441, 1448, 1452, and 1660 (Sawyer 1968). A single form with *ē* appears in Ch Peterbor (DOE short title (not in Sawyer)). On the Kentish charter materials, see below.

⁹ The Corpus Glossary is usually considered to be Mercian (Campbell 1959: 110).

Epinal Glossary yields one example of *e*-caudata about every eighty-two Old English words, and, similarly, *ɛ* is found in Epinal in some positions which indicate the dialect origins of the Old English text, e.g., *gārleɕ* for *gārlēac* looks like another example of Anglian smoothing. Most notable, though, is that many of the Old English words in Epinal preserve *e*-caudata in unstressed syllables (eight of fourteen), as in *forslaegen* and *hraebnɛs*. And, again, the preservation of *ɛ* in unstressed syllables in Epinal may be a sign of the text's early date (Pheifer 1974: lxxv). The Erfurt Glossary only preserves *e*-caudata in the form *cre* (Lindsay 1921: 82). In the much shorter Leiden Glossary (284 words in Old English), fourteen examples of *e*-caudata translate to one use of the graph about every fourteen words, but, notably, all examples of *ɛ* except five fall in unstressed syllables (Holthausen 1916–17).

A similarly high frequency of the use of *ɛ* relative to other kinds of Old English texts seems to obtain in the continuous and occasional glosses as well. The gloss on the Lindisfarne Gospels records 229 uses of *ɛ*, while the gloss on the Rushworth Gospels records 391 examples. *E*-caudata in the Lindisfarne gloss is found in a wide range of contexts: for long and short *æ* in stressed syllables (e.g., *lɛrende* and *fɛder*), in word-final positions (e.g., *heartɛ* and *ceastre*), and in content words as well as in function words (e.g., *dege* and *þem*). Aldred's gloss uses *e*-caudata in 172 different words, but his highest frequency forms are *cwɛð* (twenty-one times, and other forms of the verb *cweðan* use *ɛ* another fifteen times) and *ɛc* (18 times). After those forms, three words use the graph three times each – *ðem*, *onfoeð*, and *wɛs* – but Aldred uses *ɛ* no more than once or twice for all remaining instances, and most of these are unique occurrences in the Lindisfarne gloss; 150 of 229 examples of *ɛ* are unique occurrences (counting examples of the use of *e*-caudata in different forms of the same lexical item – e.g., *spreɕ*, *spreɕende*, etc. – only once). In the Rushworth Gospels, the two scribes of the continuous interlinear gloss use *ɛ* approximately equally – 201 times for Farman and 190 for Owun. And taken as a whole, again, *e*-caudata is found in a wide range of contexts, but notable is that Owun restricts the use of *ɛ* to far fewer forms than does Farman. Owun uses *ɛ* in only fifty-nine different words, while Farman uses the graph in 137 different words. The difference between the two scribes' range of usage over the spelling of different words is due (quantitatively) to Owun's emphasis on spelling the pronoun *hīe* as *hīɛ* some 110 times in the sections that he glosses. In fact, Owun only spells the form as *hīe* thirteen times in his portion of the gloss where the pronoun appears 201 times (with *hīæ* appearing seventy-seven times). Farman spells the pronoun as *hīɛ* twenty-five times and *hīe* sixty-five times in his portions of the gloss (with another seventy-seven *hīæ* spellings), but in both scribes' work on the Rushworth Gospels, the form *hīɛ* is the most frequent single word with *e*-caudata. Forms of

the verb *cweðan* are the second most frequently found words in the Old English glosses to the Rushworth Gospels that are written with *e*. Owun has *cweð* thirteen times and *cweðende* once, while Farman has *cweðen* (two times), *cweþ* (eleven times), *cweþeþ* (one time), and *cweþende* (five times). Since the glosses on the Lindisfarne Gospels and on the Rushworth Gospels translate the many forms of the Latin verbs *dico* and *aio*, comparison of the forms of the Old English verb *cweðan* in Tables 13.2, 13.3a, and 13.3b, which is usually the gloss, which is usually the gloss on the Latin term provided by Aldred, Farman, and Owun, is instructive.

Table 13.2: Forms of *cweðan* in the Lindisfarne gloss

<i>Lindisfarne Gospels</i>		
<i>Stem</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Number</i>
cwæð-	cwæð	2
cwæþ-	–	0
cuæð-	cuæð, cuæðas, cuæðes, cuæðo	104
cuæþ-	–	0
cwæd-	–	0
cuæd-	cuædon	1
cweð-	cweð, cweðende, cweðo, etc.	9
cweþ-	–	0
cueð-	cueð, cueðo, cueðende, etc.	367
cueþ-	–	0
cwed-	cwēdon	1
cued-	cuēdon, cuede, cuedo, etc.	53
gecwæð-	–	0
gecwæþ-	–	0
gecuæð-	gecuæð	7
gecuæþ-	–	0
gecwæd-	–	0
gecuæd-	–	0
gecweð-	–	0
gecweþ-	–	0
gecueð-	(gi-)gecueð, gecueðas, gecueðæs	11
gecueþ-	–	0
gecwed-	–	0
gecued-	(gi-)gecueden, gecueðon, gecuede, etc.	17

Table 13.3a: Forms of *cweðan* in Farman's gloss

<i>Rushworth Gospels (Farman, Ru¹)</i>		
<i>Stem</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Number</i>
cwæð-	cwæðendo, cwæð	5
cwæþ-	cwæþ, cwæþende, cwæþe, etc.	240
cuæð-	–	0
cuæþ-	–	0
cwæd-	cwædon, cwædun	33
cuæd-	–	0
cweð-	cweðe, cweðap	6
cweþ-	cweþende, cweþeð, cweþan, etc.	100
cueð-	–	0
cueþ-	–	0
cwed-	cwēdun, cwēden	24
cued-	–	0
gecwæð-	gicwæð	5
gecwæþ-	gecwæþ	1
gecuæð-	–	0
gecuæþ-	–	0
gecwæd-	gecwæden	3
gecuæd-	–	0
gecweð-	gecweðe	1
gecweþ-	gecweþ, gecweþanne	2
gecweð-	–	0
gecweþ-	–	0
gecwed-	gecweden, gicweden, gicwedun, gicwede	6
gecued-	–	0

In the gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels, we can add about a thousand forms of the verb *cweðan* with the stem shape *cwoeð-*.¹⁰ The high number of forms of *cweðan* in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses naturally translates to the highest concentration of *e* in the text.

And as Tables 13.4, 13.5a, and 13.5b show, the most common forms of (ge-)*cweðan* in which the scribes of the glosses use *e* are *cueð* (Lindisfarne)

¹⁰ Hogg (1992: 203–4) and Campbell (1959: 133) state that *oe*-spellings in the Lindisfarne gloss suggest rounding of *e* after *w* in tenth-century Northumbrian.

Table 13.3b: Forms of *cweðan* in Owun's gloss

<i>Rushworth Gospels (Owun, Ru²)</i>		
<i>Stem</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Number</i>
cwæð-	cwæð, cwæðo, cwæða	665
cwæþ-	–	0
cuæð-	–	0
cuæþ-	–	0
cwæd-	cwædun, cwæd	2
cuæd-	–	0
cweð-	cweðo, cweðende, cweðe, etc.	229
cweþ-	–	0
cueð-	–	0
cueþ-	–	0
cwed-	cwēdun, cwēdon, cwed, etc.	174
cued-	–	0
gecwæð-	gicwæð	12
gecwæþ-	–	0
gecuæð-	–	0
gecuæþ-	–	0
gecwæd-	–	0
gecuæd-	–	0
gecweð-	–	0
gecweþ-	–	0
gecueð-	–	0
gecueþ-	–	0
gecwed-	gicweden, gicwede, gicwedun, gicwedeno	15
gecued-	–	0

and *cweþ/cweð* (Rushworth). And the scribes use these forms to gloss a number of different Latin forms of *dico*: 3rd person singular present *dicit* (eleven times); 3rd person singular perfect *dixit* (fifteen times); 3rd person singular imperfect *dicebat* (two times), etc.¹¹ But if *ē* is simply an alternate graph for *æ*, as is usually taken for granted, then the scribes (and Aldred, in particular) present us with something of a puzzle: if *cuēð/cweþ/cweð* should be simply 1st and 3rd person singular past

¹¹ In Lindisfarne, *cuoēð* glosses *ait* once.

Table 13.4: *ę*-spellings of *cweðan* in Lindisfarne

<i>Lindisfarne</i>		
<i>OE gloss</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>number of occurrences</i>
cuęð	ait	5
	dicit	5
	dic	2
	dixit	7
	dicens	1
	dixi	1
cuoęð	dixit	2
	dicit	1
cuoęðað	dicite	1
	dixerint	1
cuoęða	dicere	1
cuęðo	dicam	1
cuęðes	dicit	1
coęðanne	dicere	1
gecuęð	aiebat	1
	dixisset	1
gecuoęð	diceret	2
	dixisset	1
gecuoęða	dicere	1

Table 13.5a: *ę*-spellings of *cweðan* in Farman's gloss

<i>Rushworth (Farman, Ru¹)</i>		
<i>OE gloss</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>number of occurrences</i>
cwęp	dixit	3
	dicit	3
	ait	5
cwępaþ	dixerimus	1
cwępende	dicentes	2
	dicens	3

tense indicative *cuæð/cwæþ/cwæð*, then their distribution in glossing present and non-present Latin forms is somewhat peculiar, since it represents in these glosses eighteen non-present Latin forms (perfect *dicit* sixteen times and imperfect *dicebat* twice) but twelve present forms

Table 13.5b: *ɛ*-spellings of *cweðan* in Owun's gloss

Rushworth (Owun, Ru ²)		
OE gloss	Latin	number of occurrences
cwēð	dixit	5
	dico	1
	dicebat	2
	dicit	3
	dicens	1
	ait	1
cwēðende	dicens	1

(present *dicit* eleven times and present *dico* once), not including eleven glosses on *ait*, which, of course is a defective verb. In Aldred's gloss on Lindisfarne, there is both substantial variation in the forms of *cweðan* and considerable duplication in the forms used to gloss Latin verbs (Brunner 1947–8: 37–8); for example, *cueð* glosses present tense *dicit* some fifty times and perfect tense *dixit* some eighty times, while *cuæð* glosses *dicit* and *dixit* in approximately equal numbers. The preferred forms in the Rushworth gloss – *cwæp* by Farman and *cwæð* by Owun – together gloss both *dicit* and *dixit* well more than 100 times.¹² In the manner in which medieval scribes must have had to make many calculations for usage based on their understanding of manuscript tradition, of language, of audience, of use, and of many other factors, it is at least plausible that competing notions created tensions for scribes to mediate continuously in their work which resulted in, from the naturally reductive point of view of modern scholarship, frustrating inconsistencies. One of those inconsistencies could be the use of *ɛ* in the Lindisfarne and Rushworth glosses: Aldred and Farman, and to a lesser extent, perhaps, Owun, may have seen the use of *ɛ* in *cueð*/*cwēð*/*cwēp*-forms as, in part, an accommodation to the tension between the Latinity of *ɛ*, the emergent confusion of *ɛ*, *æ*, and *e*, the understanding of Latin verbs building tenses on stem groups, and the mismatch of the Latin verb system, in which the root vowel is preserved through the tenses (as in present *dicit* and perfect *dixit*), to the two-tense organization with the ablaut change of the root vowel in the Old English strong verb at issue here. In other words, a form like *cueð* in Lindisfarne or *cwēp*/*cwēð* in Rushworth for *dicit* and *dixit* might represent a middle ground in the negotiation between forms with *e* and *æ*, between Latin verb and Old English verb, where the history of *e-caudata* in the script acknowledges at once *e* in the present stem and *æ* in the first past

¹² But Farman has a clear preference for *cwæp* to gloss *dixit*.

stem. The variability extends to other forms of the verb that might be explained as scribal attention to the way the Latin in front of the scribe structures itself, such as when Aldred glosses present, imperfect, and future tense Latin forms built on the present stem, he may have sometimes decided to use a form of *cweðan* with *e*, even when glossing a non-present form like a Latin imperfect verb, as he does when he provides the gloss *cueð* on *dicebat* in Matthew 9.21 or in Luke 13.18. In other words, the scribes of this set of glosses may have at times taken into consideration (among several competing considerations) analogy to Latin verb stem groups in their use of *ē*, a plausible hypothesis that settles on neither mythical phonological considerations nor on simple occasional substitution for *æ* for explanation.

In any event, the relatively high incidence of *e*-caudata in the continuous and occasional glosses and in the Old English words in Latin–English glossaries and the possibility that Latin stem groups may have colored scribal choices for writing forms of *cweðan* in them certainly suggest one factor that conditioned scribes’ use of the graph: text type. Since *e*-caudata developed in and spread through Latin writing in early medieval texts, Anglo-Saxon scribes may have been more conscious of its frequent use in writing English in the immediate context of Latin writing (particularly where *ē* is present) in glosses and glossaries. Text type can condition usage in the same way that discourse context conditions usage. The immediate Latinity of interlinear glosses and of Latin–English glossaries certainly suggests a channel through which the use of *ē* could be encouraged in the vernacular, and, as stated above, the relative proportions of the occurrence of *e*-caudata does suggest that scribes were much more apt to use the graph in the glossaries and interlinear glosses. But what about the possibility of some other conditions in texts where *ē* occurs? We have already noted the low incidence of *e*-caudata in Old English verse, but, notably seventeen of the sixty-nine examples occur in the *Kentish Hymn* and *Kentish Psalm*, which preserve more examples of *ē* than any other verse texts. Of course, the manuscript preserving the poems, British Library, Cotton Vespasian D.vi, also preserves several Latin texts, like the *Proverbia Salomonis* (with many interlinear glosses in Old English), Alcuin’s *De virtutibus et vitiis* (with thirty-five interlinear glosses), and an incomplete version of the *Disticha Catonis* (Ker 1957: 268–9; Kalbhen 2003: 13–15; Gneuss and Lapidge 2014: 315–16). And, once again, we find that a relatively high frequency of *ē* in Old English appears in a manuscript context with Latin. Both the Old English glosses on the Latin texts and the Old English verse texts in Cotton Vespasian D.vi demonstrate a marked tendency (relative to the corpus of Old English) to use *e*-caudata. In the Old English glosses found in Cotton, Vespasian D.vi, twenty-three glosses use *ē*: *swēið* (*swēgð*, from *swēgan*); *geefenlēc* (*geefenlæc*, from *geefenlæcan*); *ēl* (*eall*); *fērð* (*færð*, from *faran*); *geefenedan* (*geæfenodon*, from

geāfenian); *sēc* (*sacc* or *sæcc*, from Latin *saccus*); *wēi* (*wæg*, from *wegan*); *behēt* (*behæt*, from *behātan*); *beþeċð* (*bepæcð*, from *bepæcan*); *wēr* (*wer*); *werra* (*wæra*); *gehyðleċt* (for *geedlæcð*, from *geedlæcan*); *tobrēt* (*tobræt*, from *tobrædan*); *geþeċað* (*geæcað* or *geēcað*, from *geī(e)can*); *geþce* (*geæce* or *geēce*); *scēr* (*scēar*);¹³ *wērde*;¹⁴ *oferetum* (*oferætum*); *gēl* (*gæle*, from *gælan*);¹⁵ *gehwæde* (*gehwæde*); *eppel* (*æppel*); *aręrð* (perhaps for *hearwað*, from *hearwian*);¹⁶ *geþcðu* (from *geī(e)can*). We can add to these three more forms with *e*-caudata found in the glosses to Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis*: *slēhð* (*slæhð*, *slehð*, or *slihð*, from *slēan*); *lęwend* (*læwend*); *fędera* (*fædera*). In the verse texts in the manuscript, we find seventeen forms with *ę*: *līfęs* (*līfes*); *sīgefest* (*sīgefæst*); *fęder* (*fæder*, twice); *hęlend* (*hælend*); *gesċeft* (*gesceaft*, twice); *arfestnesse* (*arfæstnesse*); *bręgo* (*brego* or *breogo*); *Hwęðere* (*Hwæðere*); *begeton* (*begēaton*, from *begietan*); *clęne* (*clæne*); *wynfęst* (*wynfæste*); *Hierusolimę*; *gefremed* (*gefremed*, twice); *męhtig* (*mihtig*). We can notice some differences between the glosses with *ę* in the prose texts and the words in the verse texts with *ę*. For example, most of the glosses with *e*-caudata are verb forms (fourteen of twenty-three) while only three of seventeen words with *ę* are verbs in the verse texts (eight are nouns). This might suggest that the scribes responsible for different sections saw *ę* in slightly different ways. In fact, Kalbhen (2003: 30–1) suggests that four tenth-century scribes are responsible for the bulk of the texts in the manuscript (including primary Latin texts and Old English glosses); Kalbhen's Scribe 4 is responsible for all of the glosses to the *Proverbia Salomonis* and *slēhð* in the gloss on *percutit* in Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis*, and Scribe 3 is responsible for *lęwend* (also in the Alcuin text) and *fędera* (for *patruus*) in a list of Latin terms of relationship. It appears that Scribe 4 considered the representation of the vocalism of Old English verbs the most suitable use of *e*-caudata, while Scribe 3's use of *ę* is scattered among nouns (8), adjectives (4), verbs (3), and a conjunction and includes unstressed vowels, as in *līfęs* and *Hierusolimę*. Scribe 3 wrote *fęder* twice (and wrote the form *fędera*, as noted above), *gesċeft* twice, and *gefremed* twice, while Scribe 4's only repeated use of *ę* comes in three forms of the verb *geī(e)can*. It certainly seems from these few examples that Scribe 4 demonstrates a more consistent use of *e*-caudata than does Scribe 3, which may suggest greater deliberateness. But neither scribe uses *ę* uniformly to represent *æ*. For example, Kalbhen suggests that the form *sweīð* is a back spelling ("umgekehrte Schreibung"), with unusual vocalization of medial *g*

¹³ Zupitza (1877: 37) suggests that this gloss on Latin *cultrum* (accusative singular for *culter*) is identical with Middle English *schere*.

¹⁴ But Zupitza (1878: 225) suggests that one could read either *węrte* or *węrce* as the gloss to *opes*. Kalbhen (2003: 219) says "Die Glosse ist vermutlich verschrieben für *weorce*. Der Glossator hat offenbar *opes* mit *opera* verwechselt."

¹⁵ For the Latin 2nd person singular present subjunctive *lactes* (from *lacto*).

¹⁶ As Zupitza (1877: 42) notes, the gloss on Latin *refrigerabit* seems to demand *hearwað*.

(2003: 164). In fact, Kalbhen sees a few of the forms with *ɛ* as back spellings, like the form *wɛr*, since Kentish in the tenth century seems to demonstrate the merger of *æ* and *e* (Campbell 1959: 122), although she also suggests that other forms, like *ɛl*, could be spelling mistakes. Back spellings are usually motivated by the merger of phonemes with traditionally distinct spellings in which the traditional spelling of one form is analogized to forms where it is unetymological. Since back spellings work through generalization – and since the standard interpretation of *ɛ* is that it is an alternate form of *æ* – we might expect to find many more unetymological *ɛ/æ* spellings in the glosses and verse texts of Cotton Vespasian D.vi, but, as Zupitza (1877: 4) points out, *æ* occurs only three times. *E-caudata*, however, occurs across a wide range of representations (and back spellings will only explain a handful): as the umlaut of *ĕa* (*slɛhð*), for *ǣ* (five times), as the umlaut of *ō* (twice), as the umlaut of *ēa* (three times, all forms of *geī(e)can*¹⁷), and always for *æ* (where *æ* never appears). Given Scribe 4's strong preference for *ɛ* in the vocalism of Old English verbs, we might suspect some phonological motivation for use of the graph. Williams suggests that, given its distribution, "we must conclude that *ɛ* cannot be regarded as representing one special phonetic value" and that "the spelling was antiquated, and that the scribe, attaching no particular phonetic importance to it, inserted it carelessly here and there" (1904: 83). But she does note that, although the Kentish glosses often spell earlier *y* with *e* (e.g. *wercan* for *wyrca*) due to the unrounding and lowering of *ȳ*, such forms are never spelled with *ɛ*, which Williams conjectures could be explained by the new *e*'s "narrower" (i.e., "tenser") realization, which may have obscured an earlier tense and lax distinction, so that the scribe could write *ɛ* for any of the older *e*-sounds, "which, when the dialect had only two varieties of *e*, could only be used for the wide sound."¹⁸

It is possible, of course, that there existed in Scribe 4's repertoire (and perhaps in that of Scribe 3, too, who never writes *ɛ* for earlier *ȳ* in the verse texts or in the two glosses that he copied) some loose phonologically motivated conditions for the use of *e-caudata*. But there does not seem to be any very strong evidence for phonological motivation in other uses of *ɛ*, especially since the vowel contrasts universally expressed by English orthography throughout the Anglo-Saxon period appear to be only height, backness, and rounding, although other contrasts rarely find their way into spelling (e.g., doubling vowel segments

¹⁷ Kalbhen (2003: 100) says "dieses Verb erscheint in den Glossen insgesamt fünfmal, davon viermal mit *ɛ* und nur einmal mit *e*. Es ist auffällig, daß die *ɛ*-Schreibung für den Umlaut von *ēa* offenbar an das Wort *geecan/geccan* gebunden ist," but I only find three forms with *ɛ*. Cf. Kalbhen (2003: 100), where she says *ɛ* appears as the umlaut of *ēa* three times.

¹⁸ There seems to be a critical typographic error in Williams' short note where she says "the scribe might carelessly write *e*" (83). But Williams later corrects the apparent mistake: "for any of these older *e* sounds the scribe might carelessly write *ɛ*" (1905: 135).

to indicate length) (Hogg 1992: 13). A weak contrast with alternate *e* sounds may have conditioned Scribe 4's non-use of *ē* for earlier *ȳ*, but that does not appear to be a factor in other texts of presumed Kentish origin which also make use of *e-caudata*. In fact, *ē* seems to appear in many texts of presumed Kentish origins (Dobbie 1942: lxxxi). In addition to the glosses and verse texts in Cotton Vespasian D.vi (and the note on the age of the world found on fols. 69b–70a, where the form *wēron* for *wæron* occurs), *e-caudata* appears in the glosses to Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis* in Brussels 1650 and in Bodleian Library, Digby 146 and in vernacular charters (Sawyer 1188, 1197, 1482, and 1510); see Table 13.6.

Of possible Kentish provenance (Campbell 1959: 8) is the will of Ealdorman Alfred (Sawyer 1508), which remarkably preserves seventy-two *ē*-spellings in a text of 650 words,¹⁹ for example, in personal names (*Ēlfrede*, *Ēðelwalde*), place names (*Lēncanfelda*, *Hwētedune*, *Cēnt*), nouns (*mēn*, *erfes*, *dege*), verbs (*hebbe*, *nebbe*, *gedele*), and many function words (*ðet*, *et*, *ēfter*).²⁰ Ker (1957: 7, 382) suggests that some of the glosses on the Aldhelm text display Kentish influence. The charters showing *e-caudata* (including Ealdorman Alfred's will), apart from their reference to southeastern place names, show Kentish forms and come from Christ Church, Canterbury. The Cotton manuscript preserving the Kentish glosses and the *Kentish Hymn* and *Kentish Psalm* may well be from St Augustine's, Canterbury. We have already seen that text type appears to correlate with relatively frequent use of *ē*-spellings in the interlinear glosses and in Latin–English glossaries, and, indeed, the same holds true for the texts considered here: the Kentish glosses, the Kentish verse texts, the glosses to Aldhelm, and the charters listed here are obviously steeped in the sort of Latinity that might influence scribal choices – the Cotton manuscript preserving the Kentish glosses and verse texts and the manuscripts preserving the Aldhelm glosses provide more examples of the use of *e-caudata* in the immediate context of Latin. And while the vernacular charters identified here are not positioned against Latin texts in the way that the other texts using *ē*-spellings are, medieval diplomatic records most certainly swim in the channel of the medieval Latinity that underwrote forms of secular administration. So in the background of such vernacular documents must be the authority of the Latin context in which legal instruments like grants of land and wills were usually recorded.

If text type – or, more properly, perhaps, Latin context – promotes the use of *ē* in Old English, it is possible that other factors also condition the graph's use in vernacular records. The cluster of texts of presumed

¹⁹ The charter has approximately one *ē*-spelling every nine words, which makes it the greatest relative frequency of *e-caudata* in any Old English text longer than a brief note.

²⁰ *ðet*/*þet* occurs thirteen times; *ðem*/*þem* occurs six times; *ēfter* occurs five times. These function words alone make up a third of the *ē*-spellings in the text.

Table 13.6: *ę*-spellings in some Kentish texts

glosses to <i>Aldhelm's De laude virginitatis</i>	meteleſte (Brussels 1650)
	gewęhtum (Brussels 1650)
	nacudwrxlęres (Digby 146)
	fręuelice (Digby 146)
Charter 1188	ſcęp
	uuęge
	tuęgen
	ſuę
	gemęnum
	forecuędenan
	ſuęsenda
	ðęm
	brytnię
	hębben
	ðęt
	ęghwilc
	ęghwilc
Charter 1197	ęlce
	węge
	ðęt
Charter 1482	ſęlle
	ſcępa
	męgas
	ſęle
	geleſten
Charter 1510	ðęr
	ſwę
	ſię
	ſwę
	feſtnię
	ðeafile
	ðeafile

Kentish origins may suggest that *e*-caudata could also be a feature of practices adopted and promoted in specific ecclesiastical centers. The scriptoria at Christ Church and St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury could have been such places (Gameson 2012: 105). Interestingly, the

Eadwine Psalter (Cambridge, Trinity College, R.17.1) from the mid-twelfth century shows extensive use of *e-caudata* in its main Latin text and in the Old English glosses to the Roman version of the psalter-text. The manuscript comes from Christ Church, Canterbury and preserves the work of known Christ Church scribes (Gibson 1992: 209), and it preserves 132 *ȝ*-spellings in the Old English glosses. Webber says of the two primary scribes of the Latin psalter and canticle texts that “[t]he diphthong *ae* is represented by an *e* with a cedilla in the form of a loop with a tail ... the diphthong *oe* is represented by an *e* with a cedilla in the form of a simple loop” (1992: 15 n. 13). That level of attention to the use of *e-caudata* is uncommon even in *de luxe* Latin manuscripts, but the scribes responsible for the Old English gloss²¹ appear to have been no more discriminating²² in the use of *ȝ* than any of the other scribes we have examined here: *e-caudata* generally represents *æ*, as in *hȝelo* (five times for *hælu*) and *cwȝeð* (four times for *cwæð*), but other uses can be found as well, e.g., in the most frequently occurring gloss in the psalter, *ȝcness* (six times for *ēcness*), which may be an influence of the spelling of the Latin word it always glosses in the Psalter, *eternum*, in the vowels of unstressed final syllables in words like *ewȝes* (once as an alternative form of *æs* for Latin *legis*) and *hæȝle* (once for *hæle*), and in the vowel of unstressed prefixes like *bȝcling* (twice for *becling* (and twice more in the form *bȝclincg*)). Function words like *ðȝ* and *ðes* also show up in the glosses. *E-caudata* shows up in the Latin text of the Psalter over 700 times, so the glossators certainly would have had the reinforcement of the text in front of them, if not the encouragement of practices taught in or of examples of books owned in Canterbury that may have put some emphasis on the use of *ȝ*. The Regius Psalter (London, British Library, Royal 2. B. v) is a tenth-century Latin psalter and canticles of the Roman version that was possibly made at Winchester but likely glossed at Christ Church, Canterbury (Ker 1957: 320). The Old English glosses preserve *ȝ* in only fifteen words but nevertheless share with the Eadwine glosses the peculiar *ȝ*-spelling for forms of Old English *æ* ‘law’ as glosses on forms of Latin *lex*. Otherwise, the Regius glosses with *ȝ* demonstrate a relatively constrained use of the graph, inasmuch as it appears only once in an unstressed syllable and represents *æ*, even for the Latin borrowing *ȝelos* (as an Old English gloss on Latin *calicis*). And another glossed

²¹ On the continuous interlinear gloss, see O’Neill 1992. The standard edition of the text remains Harsley 1889.

²² Or they may be even somewhat less discriminating; English had changed so substantially by the mid-twelfth century that documents written before the Conquest could present some serious challenges for their users. The Old English glosses in the Eadwine Psalter are often perplexing and were subject to heavy (sometimes confusing) correction. O’Neill suggests that “many of the peculiar spellings and forms in the Eadwine gloss reflect scribal difficulties with this archaic language” (1992: 135).

psalter, the famous Vespasian Psalter (London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.i) preserves *ȝ*-spellings 101 times in a ninth-century continuous interlinear gloss, and, in spite of the general acceptance of the text as the main witness of the Mercian dialect since it agrees with an array of apparent phonological criteria in localizable Mercian charters, the manuscript may have close connections to Canterbury (Sisam 1956; Ker 1957: 267; Wright 1967).²³ Once again, the form *ȝe* figures in the Vespasian Psalter gloss as the most frequent single *ȝ*-spelling (six times and *ȝew* once), and just ten other lexemes make up almost half of the uses of *e*-caudata (like *dȝgas/dȝga/dȝgum* (nine times), *flȝsc/flȝsce* (five times), and *ūtālȝdde/ūtālȝdeð/ūtālȝdes* (seven times), while most of the remaining *ȝ*-spellings are spread across single forms (like *ðȝm*, *ȝest*, and *sweȝ*), although four forms occur more than once (*hȝlu* (three times), *cwȝcede* (two times), *fȝt* (two times), and *ingȝð* (two times)). To be sure, *e*-caudata appears in glossed texts (especially glossed psalters), like the Lindisfarne and Rushworth Gospels, in manuscripts not associated with Kentish centers: the Lambeth Psalter (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 427) preserves eleven *ȝ*-spellings and is associated with southwest England; the Junius Psalter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 27) preserves three *ȝ*-spellings, and it comes possibly from Winchester; and, of course, Aldred, the Lindisfarne glossator, used thirty *ȝ*-spellings for his gloss on the Durham Ritual (Durham, Cathedral Library A.IV.19). But the preponderance of *e*-caudata in texts associated with Kentish centers does suggest that the graph may have been especially cultivated in vernacular writing by scribes working in or trained in south-eastern England, in general, but, perhaps, in Christ Church and St Augustine's in Canterbury, in particular. In this light, the significance of *ȝ* to signal something more than a mere alternative for *æ* supports a concern for manuscript readings in which spelling variations may provide evidence of factors beyond phonology that conditioned the records we have inherited from the Anglo-Saxons. Spelling variations in Old English texts often meet one of two fates in the hands of their modern observers: they are tortured into submission through elaborate phonological reasoning, or they are ignored as purely "orthographical" in nature. *E*-caudata in Old English – unevenly attested as it is – has surely suffered the latter of these, but even a brief review of its distribution in the corpus of Old English suggests that Anglo-Saxon scribes' calculations about the conditions of its use could extend beyond the occasional substitution for *æ*.

²³ The language of the gloss as the best example of Mercian dialect is not necessarily in conflict with the manuscript's apparent Canterbury provenance. As Hogg suggests, "The anonymous [Vespasian] *Psalter* was probably written at Canterbury by a Kentish scribe who faithfully copied a West Mercian original (presumably from Lichfield, one of the major diocesan centres)" (2006: 359). Also see Sisam 1956: 127.

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Some Observations on e-caudata in Old English Texts

- Williams, I. 1904. "The Significance of the Symbol ϵ in the Kentish Glosses." *Otia Merseiana* 4: 81–3.
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The Poetics of Poetic Words in Old English

Dennis Cronan

It is difficult to reach an appropriate estimate of the aesthetic value of the Old English poetic vocabulary. There is an abundance of research that we can do, and have done, with this body of words: we can catalogue them, establishing along the way the criteria that determine their classification (Griffith 1991); we can compare the alliterative frequencies of poetic and non-poetic words (Cronan 1986; Griffith 2013); we can examine the occurrences of those poetic words which also appear in prose and glosses (Frank 1994; Griffith 2014); we can identify and discuss the poetic meanings of polysemantic words (Cronan 2003); we can analyze the usage and/or distribution of these words in individual poems (Metcalf 1973; Griffith 1991); and we can investigate the evidence that words with limited distribution provide for dating (Cronan 2004; Neidorf 2013–14). As necessary and important as this research is, it remains a means to an end – the achievement of a fuller understanding of the nature and the value of the poetic character of the vocabulary as a whole. Unfortunately this goal has proved to be rather elusive for modern scholars whose own direct poetic experience is based upon a tradition which dates back only to Chaucer. This later tradition developed around the reliable constants of end-rhyme, predictable, if frequently varied, metrical patterns, and a diction that often relied, to a greater or lesser degree, upon words also used in colloquial English or in educated discourse. One constant in the verse of the last six hundred years is that the poetic quality of individual words usually depends upon their selection and placement in the poetic line and passage. When we turn from this verse, in which aesthetic value is a product of the usage and combination of individual words, to the phenomenon of the overwhelming mass of poetic words in Old English, we cannot help but wonder if these words as a group are poetic in any sense apart from their restriction to verse. Some scholars are inclined to dismiss these words as a technical resource for meeting the demands of alliteration and the verse-structure, while others pursue the opposite course and attempt to distinguish the meanings and connotations of individual words and to approach their usage in ways that differ little from analyses of more recent poetry.

My purpose here is to explore an approach that I believe can bridge this dichotomy and demonstrate that the poetic vocabulary as a

whole is poetic in multiple ways. It is indeed a technical resource for meeting alliteration and filling the half-line. But it goes well beyond this function and serves a range of semantic and aesthetic purposes, many of which shade into what we might call a social ideology. Each word is appropriate to its immediate context, although the degree of the poetic fit can vary widely from the specific to the general, and can require us to read the occurrences of some words in the context of the poem instead of the passage, and even in the context of the tradition as a whole. Coupled with the repetition that is a common and characteristic feature of the verse, the poetic words contribute to interlocking networks of synonyms and compounds – indeed they frequently constitute and dominate these networks. Through repetition the words in these networks metonymically reinforce the heroic ethos even as they serve the narrative and rhythmic purposes of the passages in which they occur. This reinforcement occurs because the subject matter of the poetry and its vocabulary developed in tandem, producing a large body of words which reflect and shape the content of the verse with a poetic intimacy that is unknown in verse lacking a dedicated vocabulary such as this. In addition, these networks and the patterns of verbal and semantic repetition strengthen not only the connections between the sound and meaning of individual words, but also between these words and their referents, producing poetic narratives that present their imagined world with a striking fullness and intensity. As Geoffrey Russom (2010: 76) emphasizes, these interconnections can be actualized only in the genre within which the vocabulary developed. Although poetic words appear throughout Old English verse, it is primarily their use in *Beowulf* that represents the most complete realization of the potential of this vocabulary.

The poetic function

My approach draws upon Roman Jakobson's concept of the *poetic function* of language, a formalistic method of analysis which can be especially useful in our exploration of the poetic vocabulary because it enables us to conceptualize some of the key differences between the language of Old English verse and that of the poetry of later centuries. According to Jakobson any act of verbal communication requires six elements: 1) an addressor (speaker, or for our purposes, a poet); 2) an addressee (a listener, an audience); 3) a code (the language system); 4) a message (discourse); 5) context (referent); and 6) contact (speech sounds or written words). The orientation of speech acts around these individual elements produces six corresponding functions:

1. emotive (expressive)
2. conative (appellative)
3. metalingual (metalinguistic)
4. poetic (aesthetic)
5. referential (denotative, ideational)
6. phatic (emphasis on the contact) (Waugh 1980: 58)

It is the focus on the message for its own sake that makes a verbal message a work of art. This focus (or set, or orientation) is the poetic function. The other functions are subordinated to this focus, not eliminated, and are present in the poetic message in varying degrees depending on genre. So, for example, the first person lyric has a strong connection to the emotive function, and the referential function is important in epic, and (presumably) in any narrative verse presented in the third person (Jakobson 1960: 62–70).

This focus on the message “projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination” (Jakobson 1960: 71). The axis of selection is the lexicon, and the axis of combination is the clause or sentence. As we speak or write, we often have a choice of words which are similar in some way. Thus, in the simple sentence, *The boy lost his hat*, we could substitute a number of synonyms, hyponyms, or a pronoun from the axis of selection for the subject, such as *the lad*, *the kid*, *the child*, *the youngster*, or *he*; for the object we could substitute *his cap*, *his toque* or *it*. In contrast, the relationship of the noun phrases *the boy* and *the cap* is determined by contiguity instead of similarity: word order identifies one as the subject and the other as the object. The principle of equivalence in the axis of selection includes not only synonyms, but also antonyms and any other types of similarity, dissimilarity, or contrast, including similarities and dissimilarities of sound. Most notably, this principle includes metaphor, which produces the equivalence of two otherwise unrelated words. Indeed, Jakobson views the axis of selection as the *metaphoric pole* because of the importance of similarity and dissimilarity in word selection, and the axis of combination as the *metonymic pole* because it relies upon contiguity (Jakobson 1956: 109–14). The projection of the principle of equivalence into the axis of combination which he sees as the defining characteristic of poetry is more than simply a projection. It is also an intensification of the role of equivalence because everything in verse becomes a matter of similarity or dissimilarity: the patterns of syllabic length and word stress, of repeated sounds, of pauses and caesuras, and of the distribution of the various parts of speech such as noun, verb, past participle, etc. All of these patterns, especially those of sound and stress, also generate a semantic equivalence and

the potential for a comparison based on either likeness or unlikeness (Jakobson 1960: 85).

Paul Friedrich has reservations about the projection theory. His own preference for the phrase “a rotation from one axis of language to another” is a useful reminder to us that we are using a metaphor when we talk about the transferral of the qualities of one axis to another. More significantly, he objects that Jakobson’s approach provides no criteria for “distinguishing between a great line of poetry and a mediocre line of advertising,” and that the structuralist emphasis on the paradigmatic axis (the axis of selection) results in a corresponding over-emphasis on metaphor. He also fears that linguistic poetics has a tendency to revert to the study of the necessary features of language that are the subject of linguistic study, and can miss the more subtle aspects of poetry (1979b: 463–4). These concerns are all valid, but they are more likely to become an issue in the study of modern poetry. Despite his critique he does not abandon the projection theory, but instead supplements it with an emphasis on the syntagmatic axis (the axis of combination), especially in performance, and on the polarities of what he terms “music” and “myth” (465–8). In the reading of an individual poem or passage, Jakobson’s method of analysis can identify those features to which we need to attend in our reading; the identification of linguistic patterns in a text is not a substitute for the reading itself. However, the poetic function is admirably suited to the study of an inherited, culture-wide phenomenon such as the Old English poetic vocabulary and the poetic structures with which it interacts.

Arbitrariness and relative non-arbitrariness

The focus upon the structure of the message in Jakobson’s scheme, upon the similarities and dissimilarities that comprise it, increases “the palpability of signs” and thus “deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects” (Jakobson 1960: 70). The patterns of poetry strengthen the relation between sound and meaning, between the signifier and the signified of the individual sign, and also the relations between sign and sign. But both Jakobson and Linda Waugh connect this intensification with the weakening of the connection between the sign and its referent (Waugh 1980: 67–8). I suspect that this weakening is true of many kinds of verse, but not all, and certainly not of epic poetry, to which even Jakobson attributes an emphasis on the referent. Be that as it may, before we can analyze some of the poetic qualities of the Old English poetic vocabulary through Jakobson’s poetic function, we need to discuss the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. The conventional nature of the sign was first addressed in Aristotle’s *Peri*

hermenias.¹ The recognition of the arbitrary relationship between sound and meaning in modern linguistics stems from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, although his insights were anticipated by Charles Sanders Peirce in his “Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs” (Buchler 1940: 98–119), as well as earlier writings. According to Saussure, a word, or linguistic sign, unites a sound image (the signifier) and a concept (the signified). The bond between these two elements is arbitrary because there is no inner relationship between sound and meaning. So, for example, there is nothing about the pronunciation of French *sœur* /sör/ which connects this sequence of sounds with the meaning ‘sister.’ Saussure also uses the term “unmotivated” to describe this relationship (1959: 67, 69).

Although this notion of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign has been widely accepted in linguistics, there have always been some scholars who have been skeptical, and since the middle decades of the last century there have been multiple discussions of ways in which the connection between sound and meaning can become less arbitrary. Emile Benveniste (1939) has pointed out that for the native speaker the connection between sound and meaning is a necessity, a given quality which is simply accepted. Friedrich argues that the linguistic sign can be regarded as non-arbitrary on two grounds, “the objectively systematic character of language and the subjective intuition of the speaker” (1979a: 3). Thomas Gamkrelidze acknowledges the intuitions of the speaker, but he relegates this intuition to the sphere of pragmatics, the study of signs in relation to their users, arguing that it has no bearing on the study of the sign in semantics and syntactics. It is this latter approach, syntactics, which he defines as the study of signs and the relations between signs, which interests Gamkrelidze. He argues that it is necessary to consider not only the relationship between the two components of the individual sign, which he characterizes as “vertical,” but also the “horizontal” relationships between the signifiers and the signified of interrelated signs (1974: 104). It is primarily such horizontal relationships that are the focus of scholars seeking to modify Saussure’s claim of arbitrariness. Waugh (1992) uses the example of diminutive suffixes such as *-ette* and *-ling* in words such as *kitchenette*, *novelette*, *duckling*, and *fledgling* to illustrate what she terms the *iconicity* of certain suffixes that consistently represent a sound-meaning combination.² Elsewhere she argues for “isomorphic iconicity,” using the example of derivatives and compounds, pointing

¹ The relevant text from Aristotle, along with classical and medieval commentaries, is presented in Arens, *Aristotle’s Theory of Language*. Jakobson (1966: 21–23) briefly discusses the notion of the linguistic sign in the Stoics and St. Augustine.

² Waugh has drawn the notion of iconicity from Peirce (Buchler 1940); Gamkrelidze (1974: 108) rejects such claims of iconicity, which he argues is restricted to diagrammatic representations.

out that a word such as *rainy* is related to *raindrop* because of their common root, and to *snowy* because of their shared suffix (1993: 75). As Waugh observes, Saussure himself views relationships such as these as “relatively motivated.” He describes the compound *twenty-nine* as slightly more motivated than the simplex *twenty*. But he regards both words as unmotivated, differing only in degree (Saussure 1959: 131), so he weighs the value of relative motivation rather weakly, and views such words as essentially arbitrary. More recent scholars are inclined to shift the emphasis, giving more weight to this type of motivation. Perhaps their position can be summed up by Friedrich’s judicious phrase “relative non-arbitrariness” (1979a). Although the connection between the sound and meaning of the simple word may be unmotivated, as soon this word enters into a relationship with other words through derivation, compounding, or inflection, this connection becomes increasingly motivated and less arbitrary.

The relationships between words in a poem, an utterance in which sound, rhythm, and meaning can be patterned in a variety of ways, also produces a more motivated connection between sound and meaning. This increased motivation is an integral part of the aesthetic impact of poetry, and a scale running from “arbitrary” to “relatively non-arbitrary” can be a useful measure of poetic intensity and quality. Although Jakobson does not emphasize it, a scale of this sort seems to be implicit in his approach to poetry.

One form of Equivalence in Old English poetry: repetition

It is easy enough to see connections between the schematics of Jakobson’s poetic function and Old English verse. Our concern here is with words and with that aspect of meter that has had the strongest influence on the development of the poetic vocabulary, alliteration. This repetition of initial sounds binds together the two half-lines, or verses, into a single line. These verses may or may not belong to a single syntactic unit, so alliteration can either reinforce syntactic meaning or affirm connections independently of syntax. Alliteration is also used to mark syntactic as well as metrical units, including noun or adjectival phrases which include a trailing prepositional phrase, such as *cýning on corðre* (*Beo* 1153a) or *wlonc bi wealle* (*Wan* 80). Double alliteration is almost universal when such phrases occur in the a-verse in *Beowulf* (Kendall 1991: 118–19). Double alliteration also frequently marks coordinate words in the a-verse, as in *billum ond byrnum* (*Beo* 40a). The requirement that fully stressed compounds always alliterate surely reflects their semantic and metrical weight (Kendall 1991: 159–74), but it is worth noting that although compounds are individual words which contain two juxtaposed elements they also

function as syntactic units which at times need to be deciphered as phrases (Robinson 1985: 14–18), a status which may also contribute to their alliterative requirement.

Randolph Quirk's discussion of alliterative collocations, which examines words connected by alliteration that are either complementary or contrastive to each other, aligns quite neatly with Jakobson's emphasis on the ability of repeated sounds to serve as vehicles for either similarity or dissimilarity. Indeed, Quirk's citation of Jakobson's work twice (1963: 160, 167) implies at least some influence of the latter on his thought. Quirk also discusses the appositions we term variation. However, although variations can include alliteration, they are more likely not to alliterate, and indeed on the most basic level these appositions may be no more than a device for switching alliteration. This function can easily be seen in a brief passage from *Andreas* discussed by Fulk and Cain (2003: 29–30; I reproduce their text and translation):

Donne eft gewāt æðelinga helm,
beorht blæd-gifa, in bold oðer,
ðær him togēanes, God herigende,
tō ðām meðel-stede manige cōmon. (655–8)

Then once again the protector of princes, bright-glory giver, went into another hall, where many, praising God, came toward him at the meeting place.

Although they use this passage to illustrate the formulaic quality of Old English verse, it also an example of the sometimes mechanical quality of variation. As they observe, the formulaic *beorht blæd-gifa* is not necessary to the sense of the narrative, but is merely a redundant appositive. It does, however, initiate the alliteration on *b*, which is required in the b-verse *in bold oðer*, and is necessary to the narrative.

Variation also has the potential to be much more than a mere structural device. The sea-voyage of the Geats to Denmark in *Beowulf* provides a number of interesting types of repetition, including some examples of the narrative and stylistic purposes that variation can serve. There is one passage in particular which illustrates much of the potential of the device. The Geats come close enough to the coast,

þæt ðā līðende land gesāwon,
brimclifu blīcan, beorgas stēape,
sīde sēnæssas; þā wæs sund liden,
eoletes æt ende. (*Beo* 221–4a)

... so that the voyagers saw land, the shining sea-cliffs, the steep hills, the broad sea-headlands; then the sea was traversed, [they were] at the end of the voyage.³

The four-member variation *land ~ brimclifu blīcan ~ beorgas stēape ~ sīde sēnæssas* has been a subject of some debate. Greenfield (1972: 68–9) argues that although it is syntactically static, this variation conveys a sense of motion from the perspective of the sailing Geats who are able to perceive increasing detail of the coast as they approach land. If we accept this reading, as I do, then we see here a remarkably effective use of the device to present a strong sense of both the motion of the ship and its arrival at the end of the voyage simply through the juxtaposition of noun phrases. On the other hand, there is something to be said for Brodeur's argument (1959: 274) that there is an enumeration here: the sequence begins with the whole *land* and then moves to its specific parts. Of course, Brodeur sees this enumeration as part of a parallelism, not a variation. But the implied motion Greenfield detects receives support from the earlier clausal variation *flota wæs on yðum ~ bāt under beorge* (210b–11a). Here Greenfield (73–4) argues for another change of perspective: as the Geats approach the coast, walking on the top of the bluff, they first see the boat in the water from above; after they have gone down the hill, they view the boat from the level of the water, with the bluff rising behind it. Despite the sophisticated use of this device in these two passages, the figure still remains tied to its more mechanical purpose of shifting the alliteration from one sound to another: most variations begin on one line of verse and are completed on the next or a succeeding line, with the alliteration differing in each line. I stress this point because I believe it is typical of poetic language throughout Old English verse as a whole: no matter how rich or sophisticated it may be, it always hews closely to the necessity of filling and varying the alliterating pulse of the line. But even when a particular word or word-element does not seem necessary to the narrative sequence or to fit the immediate context in any way, it still serves a purpose beyond the merely mechanical.

In addition to the semantic repetitions we see in the device of variation, there is another, simpler form of repetition in this sea-voyage passage, the recurrence of individual words or roots. Even when we restrict ourselves to words which reoccur within twenty lines, a range which I believe is brief enough for these words to be noticeable on some level, there are twenty-one repeated words or roots: *lēod-* (205b, 225a); *sund(-)* (208a, 213a, 223b); *(-)wudu* (208a, 216b, 226a); *secg* (208b, 213b); *land(-)* 209b, 221b; *gewāt* (210a, 217a); *flota* (210b, 218a); *yð(-)*

³ All quotations from *Beowulf* are taken from Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008, with diacritics omitted. Unless otherwise noted, the translations are my own.

(210b, 228a); *beorge* (211a, 222b); *stigon* (212a, 225b); (-)*stefn* (212a, 220a); *wund-* (212b, 220a); *bæron/beran* (213b, 231a); *beorht* (215b, 231b); *gūð-* (215a, 227a); *-searu* (215a, 232a) (-)*holm(-)* (217a, 230a); *fȳs-/fūs-* (217b, 232a); *liðende-/liden/lāde* (221a, 223b, 228a); *sāwon/ seah* (221b, 229a); *clifu-* (222a, 230a). This is a type of repetition which Beatty (1934) calls the “echo-word,” and which Rosier (1977) terms “generative composition.” Both scholars include lists of these repetitions in *Beowulf* although neither of them examine a run of such words in particular passages. John Miles Foley, who discusses the repetitions in this passage in some detail (1980: 129–3), terms this phenomenon *respon-sion*, which he defines as a kind of ‘local theme’ engendered by lexical focus. Although there is always going to be some degree of verbal repetition in any form of discourse, given the abundance of synonyms in the poetic language a dense sequence of repetitions such as this is surprising, to say the least. For our purposes, this sequence demonstrates that in *Beowulf*, and presumably in the tradition as a whole, repetition was valued for its own sake, not merely for structural purposes, as in the case of alliteration, or as a stylistic and narrative device which developed out of the need to meet the demands of alliteration, as in the case of variation.

The poetic vocabulary

The presence of so many verbal repetitions is even more surprising when we note the sheer number of synonyms that occur in this passage. As Andy Orchard points out (2003: 74–5) there are six distinct words for ‘man, warrior,’ seven for ‘boat, ship,’ five for ‘sea,’ and seven for ‘land’ or parts of the land. Of these twenty-five words, eleven belong to the poetic vocabulary.⁴ The density of repetition and the rich verbal patterning we encounter in this passage is not typical of the poetic corpus as a whole, or even of *Beowulf* itself, although it does appear to be a characteristic feature of the descriptions of sea-voyages; *respon-sion*, for example, also occurs in the Geats’ voyage home (1880b–1919; see Foley 1980: 133 for a list of the repeated words). But the individual forms of repetition we encounter in this passage – variation, *respon-sion*, and the use of an abundance of synonyms – do occur frequently throughout the corpus. This passage simply exhibits an intensification of features that appear everywhere in the verse. The tradition as a

⁴ I have omitted repeated words from his count. Orchard marks three additional words as poetic: *eoteles*, which is a simple hapax of uncertain meaning whose status is unclear; *leode*, a plural form whose singular is regarded by some (not by me) as poetic in the meaning ‘prince’; and since *bundenne* is merely the past participle of the verb *bindan*, and *wudu bundenne* is a noun phrase, not a compound, I assume that the marking of *bundenne* is a mistake.

whole places a premium on semantic and verbal repetition and on a rich, patterned density of expression. Oral-derived verse in other cultures, such as the Homeric poems, frequently exhibits a quality known as “thrift,” an economy of expression which avoids the accumulation of multiple ways of saying the same thing. In contrast, Old English verse flaunts an astonishing multiplicity of words and phrases with overlapping and synonymous meanings. Of course, this phenomenon is to some extent a product of the alliterative verse-form. But there is a superfluity, an over-flowing abundance of words and phrases that seems to surpass the demands of alliteration. Repetition of any sort is an inherent, highly-valued aspect of the Old English poetic style.

In order to appreciate the contribution of the poetic words to this abundance of words and phrases, we must first consider the size of this vocabulary. Mark Griffith (1991: 183–5) has published a list of about 350 poetic words. This list includes simple nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, as well as a few bound morphemes such as *heapo-* which occur only in compounds. He also includes derivatives such as *andlēan* and *berēofan*, but not compounds, viewing only those compounds with one or more poetic elements as poetic. My own list of poetic words includes 262 simple nouns and adjective, 13 adverbs and 66 verbs with or without prefixes. In the case of the nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, this count includes words that occur in two or more poems; in the case of the verbs, I have raised the minimum threshold to three poems. Because verbs are not as closely connected with the alliterative structure of the verse, I have chosen to be more cautious in counting them. There are also 843 compounds that occur in two or more poems, and 2,549 *hapax legomena*, compounds that are found in only one poem.⁵ I have included nouns and adjectives with stressed prefixes in these counts because their stress patterns mimic those of full compounds, although as Kendall points out (1991: 175, 191), their alliterative requirement can differ from that of full compounds.

Griffith’s list and mine differ in two significant ways. Any attempt to classify a large group of words such as this will inevitably result in some gray areas where the status of words is uncertain or debatable. There are two such gray areas here: low frequency words and words that occur mainly in poetry along with limited occurrences elsewhere. Both Griffith and I require a simplex to occur in at least two poems in order for it to be regarded as poetic. He also requires a minimum of four occurrences for each word, while I am willing to consider words that appear only two or three times, and to examine each of these words on a case by case basis. He is more open to including words

⁵ The term *hapax legomena* is usually used of words that occur only once. I have broadened the term to include words that are found in only one poem, even if they occur several times.

that appear in prose and/or glosses than I am, adopting a four to one ratio of occurrences in verse to those in prose (168). Here as well I prefer to examine the usage of such words on a case-by-case basis. In actual practice, our approaches are actually rather similar, and Griffith has recently published (2014) an impressive study of poetic words whose use in glosses reflect some rhetorical heightening or the poetic qualities of the underlying Latin texts from which *glossae collectae* have been gathered. Yet his list includes some words, such as *benc* and *wiga*, which I classify as non-poetic, and my list includes words, such as *mece*, which he does not view as poetic. These gray areas and disagreements remind us that in the classification of poetic words the precision of our numbers, such as those I have presented in the previous paragraph, can be a bit misleading. Nonetheless, although each of these numbers is debatable and could be modified to a minor degree, they serve as a useful index to the size and scope of the poetic vocabulary.

Our disagreement about the status of the compounds is more significant. Griffith does not regard compounds as poetic unless they include one or more poetic simplexes. His observation that “compounds may be regarded as products of a technique of compounding, rather than forms which were remembered by the poets as part of the word-hoard” is certainly true (1991: 168).⁶ Over half (465) of the 843 poetic compounds in my list appear in only two poems, and some, perhaps many, of these words were likely formed independently by the poets who used them. But at some point the appearance of a compound in multiple poems must indicate that it is an inherited word. There are, for example, 206 compounds that are found in four or more poems. Surely these words belong to the word-hoard. Moreover, we must remember that the surviving texts are probably only a fraction of the poems that were actually composed during the period. Between the texts that have been lost and oral compositions, which were never committed to writing, a large number of poems and the words that occurred in them are invisible to us today. If more poems had been recorded and survived, then the number of compounds that appear in four or more texts would be much higher. There are also the compounds found in more than one Germanic dialect, conveniently listed by Niles (1981: 496–7), many of which had probably belonged to the word-hoard for centuries. Thus, even by Griffith’s method of classification, there are many compounds that were inherited and belonged to the poetic vocabulary.

My own approach differs in that I regard not only inherited words but also the poets’ own formations as poetic. In my view the poetic vocabulary is both conservative and innovative. Along with the

⁶ Griffith prefaces this statement with the observation that the matter is arguable.

simplexes, the poets also inherited a variety of matrices for the formation of compounds. I include among the poetic vocabulary not only the 843 compounds that appear in two or more poems, but also the 2,549 compound *hapax legomena*. These words always alliterate and they are a prominent and distinctive part of the poetry, where they occur with a frequency and variety that is unmatched by compounds in prose texts.

By my count there are thus 3,763 poetic words, the overwhelming majority of which occur in only one poem. To put this number in perspective, we can adopt a figure from Jess Bessinger's *Short Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, which contains about 5,000 entries. Most compounds are excluded from this number, as are the various forms of the demonstratives and the personal pronouns (1960: v). Adding the number of poetic compounds to this figure suggests there are roughly 8,500 distinct words in the surviving Old English poems. 44 percent of these words are poetic. When it comes to the overall occurrences of the poetic words, the proportions are rather different. According to Bessinger and Smith's *Concordance* there are roughly 175,000 word occurrences in the verse (1978: ix). If we subtract the occurrences of function words and auxiliary verbs listed in their appendix which appear more than 100 times, this leaves approximately 115,000 occurrences of words which are predominantly content words, that is, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, words which are thus comparable to the poetic words.⁷ The poetic words, as a group, occur about 12,400 times, accounting for almost 11 percent of the occurrences of all content words.⁸ Although this latter percentage may seem low – and indeed in some passages of the verse the percentage is considerably higher – it is clear that the poetic words are a substantial as well as a distinctive aspect of Old English verse.

This vocabulary presumably developed in tandem with the verse itself. The cognates of some of these words, such as *beadu*, *brego*, *gūð*, and *rinc* (see Cronan 1986: 148 for a complete list of the simplices, and Niles 1981: 496–7 for a list of compounds), are restricted to poetry in Old Norse as well, and these words were probably inherited as poetic from the distant Germanic past. The primarily heroic content of the vocabulary indicates that in the years before the conversion heroic verse predominated, although there were probably other genres as well, such as eulogy and maxim sequences. Over the centuries more words were added, a process we can infer from the differences between

⁷ Cataloging and subtracting all the occurrences of function words and auxiliary verbs would reduce the 115,000 figure even further, and thus increase the percentage of the occurrences of poetic words marginally. But these figures are sufficient to illustrate the point I am making.

⁸ The difference between these two percentages can be attributed in part to the *hapax legomena* compounds. Although some of these words occur more than once, as a group they appear only 2,930 times.

the poetic vocabularies of Old Norse and Old English. These additional words, like the older ones, reflected and facilitated the presentation of the heroic content of the verse. As individual words became restricted to poetry and new compounds spread to the compositions of multiple poets, the poetic status of these words also became part of the selection axis. Here we see a significant difference from modern poetry. In Old English verse, as in modern verse, the principle of equivalence is projected (or rotated, to use Friedrich's metaphor) from the axis of selection to the axis of combination. But unlike modern verse, in Old English the poetic vocabulary, a product of the metrical and syntactic rules of combination and of the heroic values, or ethos, of the verse, was introjected into the axis of selection. This axis included not only the ordinary words of the language, but also the inherited poetic words and the possibility of the formation of new compounds modeled upon those that already existed. The formation of new compounds was possible in the language as a whole, of course, but the poetry placed a much higher premium on such formations than the prose and (presumably) the colloquial language.

As a result of this introjection, the linguistic code for poetry differed considerably from that of the rest of the language. These differences included other aspects of the verse, such as the alliterative and metrical requirements, and the formulae and the formulaic matrices, but the most substantial component was the lexicon, a vocabulary, moreover, which embodied the heroic ethos of the poetry.⁹ As a result, Old English heroic verse focused not only on the message – the verbal, phonological, and metrical texture of the poem –, and on the referent – the persons, objects, and actions of the story –, but also on the linguistic code, a code which included a considerable ideological component. Friedrich, who argues that any poem can potentially work with the linguistic code, points to the formulae of Serbian and Homeric poetry as examples “where the poem goes back into the structure of the code” (1979b: 460–1). We see this introjection in Old English verse as well, and every change in the status of a word from an unmarked ordinary word to a marked poetic word, and every new compound changed the code, even if only slightly. The accumulation of these small changes over the years produced a much more substantial and consequential alteration. It is clear that the poetic vocabulary, the poetic tradition, and the individual poems were in a symbiotic relationship with one another. The paradigmatic and the syntagmatic axes were also in a symbiotic relationship; each was dependent upon the other and a change in one produced a change in the other.

⁹ It was while reading Tom Shippey's discussion of the *Beowulf* poet's concern with expressing the heroic ethos in “The Fall of King Hæðcyn” (2010: 258–60) that I first realized the central importance of this ethos to the usage of the poetic vocabulary.

Fulk and Cain observe that “heroic literature is by nature archaizing, aiming to memorialize the deeds of ancestors, and archaized language belongs particularly to the realm of poetry” (2003: 29). I am a bit uncomfortable with the phrase “archaized language” because I find it disconcerting that we view the poetic vocabulary (or any other aspect of the verse) as “archaic” when we assume, with good reason, that the poetry was wide-spread and popular throughout the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms for at least several centuries of the historical period.¹⁰ Perhaps we use the word “archaic” because we lack an equivalent of *ǣrgōd* ‘good from old days,’ a compound found only in *Beowulf* but one which so perfectly encapsulates the central poetic value of the continuity between the past and the present that I have difficulty believing it was not part of the inherited word-hoard. In any case, one of the ideas behind their observation, that heroic poetry has a tendency to transform everything it touches into itself, is certainly true, as can be seen in the heroicized biblical and hagiographical narratives of Old English verse. This observation applies to the vocabulary of the verse as well. The poetic words are themselves inherently marked through their restriction to verse. But other words can also become marked. As Friedrich observes, “aesthetic marking may be achieved through the use of marked forms or the use of unmarked forms in marked contexts” (1979b: 462). Although the majority of the words in the poetry were everyday, unmarked words, many of them have, to some extent, taken on heroic and poetic worth through their repeated association with the poetic words. We can see this quality most clearly in the case of words that are not restricted to poetry but yet have high alliteration rates (85 percent or higher), such as *bold*, *hyldu*, *mōdig* and *rīce*. By my count there are 89 such words in *Beowulf*. This assimilation is of course aided by the continuities between the values and aspirations characteristic of the verse and those that belonged to the aristocratic culture of the time. But even a word such as *ceorl*, whose meaning ranges from ‘a man’ to ‘an ordinary freeman’ to ‘a peasant’ can be assimilated to the heroic world through the addition of an appropriate adjective as in the case of the *snotere ceorlas* of *Beowulf* (202, 416, 1591), a phrase which designates the wise men, the king’s advisors among the Geats and the Danes.

The presence of the poetic words has, to a considerable degree, heroicized the selection axis as a whole, and thus the lexical component of the linguistic code. Although there is no overt metalinguistic interaction with this code, the poetry repeatedly affirms the semantic and ideological components of the code with every occurrence of a poetic or a heroicized word. John Miles Foley has argued that

¹⁰ However, there are individual words in the verse (as opposed to the vocabulary as a whole) that were archaic.

noun-epithet formulas such as “swift-footed Achilles” in the *Iliad* need not be regarded as either metrical fillers or as expressions which are somehow subtly sensitive to their context, but can instead serve as a metonymic shorthand which can summon up an entire heroic personality (1986; his arguments are presented at much greater length in Foley 1991, which includes a discussion of *Beowulf*). In a similar way every poetic word is a minor metonym for the values of the tradition as a whole. Of course the impact of a single word is much more diffuse than that of a noun-epithet, but these words never occur in isolation, and the effect is cumulative as words support each other, especially in the case of compounds, alliterative collocations, responsion, variation, and other forms of repetition, either semantic or verbal. A proposition as general and as broad as this one is difficult to demonstrate directly, but a brief examination of a few verbal networks will at least demonstrate its plausibility.

The semantic appropriateness of the compounds *East-Dene* (392, 616, 828), *Norð-Dene* (783), *Sūð-Dene* (463, 1996), and *West-Dene* (383, 1578) in *Beowulf* has been a matter of some debate. Bryan (1929) and Storms (1957) have argued, at times with considerable ingenuity, that the first elements of these words are not provided merely for the sake of alliteration, but are meaningful in their own right. Magoun (1949) believes that the poet used these terms interchangeably, although he argues that they are based on early groupings of the Danes. Tom Shippey (2010: 255–6) can detect no meaning whatsoever in the alliterative elements of these words. Similarly, the editors of *Klaeber’s Beowulf* take these compounds as meaning simply “Danes,” but they qualify this statement by suggesting that these words may “perhaps express the expansiveness of the Danish hegemony” (2008: cxvi). I think this suggestion is exactly right. All of these compounds means something like ‘the wide-ruling Danes,’ and this meaning is achieved indirectly through metonymy as each word emphasizes one of the cardinal directions in which the Danish realm extends. These four compounds form a small network within the larger network of compound words for the Danes: *Gār-Dene*, *Beorht-Dene*, and *Hring-Dene*.

Poetic networks more frequently consist of simple and compound synonyms. There are nine simple words for ‘hall’: *sæl*, *seld*, *sele*, *reced*, occur only in poetry while *ærn*, *bold*, *heall*, *hof*, and *salor* appear in both prose and verse; *ærn* occurs only once in poetry, and the basic meanings of *ærn*, *bold*, and *reced* is ‘house, building,’ although as simplexes in the verse all are more likely to refer to a hall. If the purpose of synonym sets such as this is to satisfy the alliterative demands of the verse, then this particular set is unsatisfactory: four of the nine words alliterate on *s* and two alliterate on *h*. But as Griffith (2013: 6–7) points out, these synonyms are supplemented by more than thirty compounds, nearly all of which include one of these words as the base word with an

initial alliterating element that reflects some aspect of life in the hall. He provides a list of these compounds, and as he observes, many of them are generated by a few semantic patterns such as 'drink-hall' and 'treasure-hall.' The meaning of compounds such as *bēagsæl*, *bēagsele*, and *maððumsele* is not 'a hall of rings' or 'a hall of treasure,' but 'a hall where rings (or treasure) are bestowed by a lord upon his retainers.' Similarly, *bēorsele* and the various compounds beginning with *medu-* or *wīn-* mean 'a hall where beer (or mead, or wine) is shared and drunk by a lord and his men.' The initial elements of such compounds are metonyms, which represent social acts in the hall, reinforcing the heroic value of the reciprocity between a lord and his retainers. Although the hall is an especially potent symbol of heroic culture and values (Hume 1974; Cramp 1993), the relationship between the elements of other sets of compounds and the heroic ideology is frequently as apparent as it is here, if not always as deep. Moreover many, perhaps all, compound synonym networks are interconnected. The network of 'hall' synonyms is connected to other networks through the re-occurrence of each of the two elements of the compounds. *Bēag-* for example, is found in six other compounds, many of which, such as *bēaggifa* 'ring-giver' and *beagðegu* 'receiving of a ring,' emphasize the importance of the bestowal and acceptance of treasure.

In a discussion of compounds in *Beowulf* with words for 'war' or 'violence' as a first element, Geoffrey Russom observed, "Redundant combinatives like 'gūð' may have evolved as devices to change the alliterative value of a noun, but the very appropriateness to genre that makes them so useful also seems to function as an index of heroism" (2010: 76). Words such as 'gūð' serve not only as an index of heroism, but also as a metonym for the inevitability of war and the necessity of courage and prowess in the heroic world. But as Russom points out, poetic words can function in this manner only in the genre within which they developed; once they are transferred to religious verse, this intimate connection between word and ideology is weakened or even lost, no matter how much such poems are superficially heroicized through their use of the poetic language.

The same indirect metonymy that we see in the *Norð-*, *Sūð-*, *East-*, *West-Dene* network is at work throughout *Beowulf* with, of course, a much greater richness of semantic reference. The subject matter, ideology, and vocabulary of this poem are in such a strong symbiotic relationship that they inevitably imply each other. In the terms of Jakobson's poetic function there is such a complete interpenetration of the axis of selection and the axis of combination that to some extent the vocabulary *is* the ideology and the subject-matter of this poem. The poetic and aesthetic value of the vocabulary as a whole lies, first of all, in this extraordinarily close relationship. This value is further enhanced by the semantic and verbal repetitions that are so widespread

throughout the verse. The poetic intensity produced by the repetitions in Beowulf's first voyage is analogous to what we encounter in many modern poems which transcend the arbitrary nature of individual signs through the participation of words in patterns where sound, rhythm, and meaning interact. Although the heavy patterning of the sea-voyage passage is by no means typical, all the forms of repetition embodied in these lines appear frequently throughout the poetry as whole. Perhaps we can say that the verse exhibits a diffuse but persistent intensity of expression in which verbal and semantic repetitions are frequent enough to create the expectation of further occurrences. The overlapping networks of synonyms and compounds are quite prominent in these repetitions, and the combination of the repetitions with the richness and density of these networks produce a medium whose signs are, in Friedrich's phrase, relatively non-arbitrary.

The large number of interlocking compound networks, of course, go a long way towards achieving this result on their own, as perhaps even Saussure would have been willing to acknowledge. The synonym networks, on the other hand, present an interesting case. Saussure could have used the multiple words for 'hall' as evidence for the arbitrariness of the sign. Taken in isolation, as merely a list of synonyms, these words would have served his purpose well. But when they are embedded in Old English poetic discourse on both the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes, where these words reinforce and support each other, the situation is very different. As Benveniste points out, for native speakers the connection between the signifier and the signified is necessary, not arbitrary. Since the audience would have simply accepted the connection between the pronunciation and meaning of a single word such as *sele* along with the connection between this word and its physical or imagined referent, the existence of nine simple and thirty-plus compound synonyms would intensify the connections between the words and their referents, producing a sort of poetic thick description. Even for an audience of modern scholars who accept the notion of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, a network of overlapping synonyms can generate an extensive coverage of the possible intersections of sound, meaning, and referent. This coverage renders the arbitrariness of any individual sign irrelevant because the cumulative impact of the network transcends it.

Like any form of language, Old English poetry is itself a network of intersecting and mutually supporting networks. Unlike colloquial speech or the language of prose, the language of this verse is a concentrated distillation of words from the language at large, a distillation produced by the intersecting demands of the alliterative meter and the heroic worldview. Although heroic poetry addresses only a circumscribed portion of the human life-world, within the bounds of this imaginative space the poetic vocabulary is entirely at one with sound,

rhythm, ideology, and subject matter. Like the language of other kinds of verse it merges form with meaning, but unlike verse lacking such a dedicated vocabulary it also merges code with content, providing a language that wholly encapsulates the values and the imagined worlds of traditional Old English verse.

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Dream of the Rood 9b: A Cross as an Angel?

Daniel Donoghue

Because he is our honorand, R.D. Fulk will be forgiven the pun in calling line 9b in *The Dream of the Rood* a “much discussed crux,” to which, he goes on to say “no entirely satisfactory solution has been found” (2001: 68). The poem’s unique and provocative re-imagining of a central paradox of Christianity has made it a favorite in student anthologies, which is one reason the half-line has elicited so many emendations and interpretations. Without a consensus, individual editors must come to a decision about it. At first glance the wording in the Vercelli Book corresponding to lines 9b–10a, *be heoldon þær engel dryht nes ealle fægere þurh forð ge sceaft*, may not seem problematic because the general sense of reverent gazing is fairly clear from the immediate context (Vercelli Book: fol. 104v). However, it presents enough syntactic, metrical, and semantic challenges that the specific sense remains unsettled. Who is looking? Who or what is the object of the gaze? As if to demonstrate the intractability of the verse, Fulk offers different readings in two recent classroom editions. His *Eight Old English Poems* sets aside Pope’s earlier emendation and edits the half-line as *behēold on þām engel dryhtnes* (“an angel of the Lord watched them [the five jewels]”; Fulk 2001: 9 and 68–9). And in his *Introductory Grammar of Old English* the clause reads *behēoldon þær engeldryhte* (“hosts of angels beheld [the jewels or spectacle] there”; Fulk 2014: 214). Both revised half-lines are punctuated as parenthetical asides, and both make an angel or angels the subject of the verb of gazing. To point out the two readings is certainly no criticism – each has much to recommend it, and every editor is entitled to change his mind – but it does serve to point out how fraught the passage has been.

My contribution to this topic reconsiders the semantic range of Old English *engel*, which as an early loanword had different connotations from Modern English “angel,” shaped by its rich history in art, literature, theology, and popular culture. First, however, it is necessary to lay out the reasons why this short passage has attracted such diverse emendations and interpretations. After the first-person narrator’s opening lines introducing his dream-vision, the poem begins the description of the extraordinary *tree*. I reproduce the lines from Clayton’s recent edition (2013: 160; with macrons added), which retains the manuscript reading, with her translation below:

6

Eall þæt bēacen wæs

begoten mid golde. Gimmas stōdon

fægere æt foldan scēatum; swylce þær fife wæron

uppe on þām eaxle-gespanne. Behēoldon þær engel Dryhtnes ealle

fægere þurh forð-gesceaft. Ne wæs ðær hūru fracodes gealga, 10

ac hine þær behēoldon hālige gāstas,

men ofer moldan, ond eall þēos mære gesceaft.

All that symbol was covered with gold. Beautiful gems shone from the corners of the earth; likewise there were five up on the intersection. All fair beings throughout creation beheld there the angel of the Lord. That was certainly not the gallows of someone despicable, but holy spirits, people all over the earth, and all this glorious creation beheld it there.

Even with the ambiguities surrounding the “much-discussed crux,” the words generate a powerful visual image. The repetition of *fægere* (8a, 10a) and the chiasmic *behēoldon þær ... þær behēoldon* (9b, 11a) invite syntactic and imagistic parallels, but they also prompt questions. The gems (7b) are beautiful, but what is *fægere* in line 10a? All of creation gazes in reverence (11a), but who is the subject of *behēoldon* in 9b? The visual appearance of the cross highlights its contradictions as an instrument of death and a beautiful object of veneration. At the center of this passage is *behēoldon þær engel dryhtnes ealle*, and because it can be construed to yield a smooth translation, a number of editors join Clayton in retaining the manuscript reading (Krapp, 1932: 61; Swanton 1996: 103; Mitchell and Robinson 2012: 266; Baker 2007: 246).

But the smooth translation masks significant problems. Verse 9b is metrically irregular in two ways. First, for a hypermetric verse it is unusually long: even without the final two syllables of *ealle* it would still be hypermetric.¹ Pope, calling the manuscript reading “corrupt,” includes the half-line among hypermetric verses only after emending it to *behēoldon þær engeldryhta fela*, which Bliss quietly accepts (Pope 1966: 101; Bliss 1967: 88–97 and 162–3).² The more accommodating metrical taxonomy in Hutcheson (1995: 321) includes the manuscript reading as the only instance with its scansion in his large corpus, the closest parallels coming from *Genesis B* (which famously retains Old Saxon metrical patterns), and each of the near parallels is also unique among the hypermetric verses.³ The second problem has to

¹ Sievers (1893: §96) includes it among a small group of “[v]ierhebige schwellverse” and emends to *behēoldon þæt englas dryhtnes ealle*. See the discussion by Fulk 2001: 68 and note 29.

² Pope has more comments on pages 111 (n. 4), and 123 (n. 14).

³ Swanton (1996: 108) overstates the case in saying that the manuscript reading “forms a quite satisfactory hypermetric verse.”

do with alliteration, because retaining the manuscript reading would seem to demand alliteration on *ealle*, which violates one of the most basic principles of Germanic alliterative verse. It is a prohibition that applies to hypermetric verses no less than normal verses.⁴ The theories of Russom (1987: 98–100) and Bredehoft (2005: 51–6), for instance, address the location of alliteration in hypermetric verses, and both preclude the possibility of final alliteration on *ealle*, although they do not discuss this half-line in particular. In fact their discussions do not directly mention so much as assume the absence of alliteration on the final stressed syllable of the off-verse because it is such a basic principle.⁵ No one has suggested avoiding the problem by assuming that *ealle* is not stressed and therefore without alliteration, because it would lead to an even more untenable scansion: x x x x S x S x x x (using Russom's notation). In fact most editors, perhaps distracted by the syntactic complexity, fail to note the faulty alliteration.⁶

The problems can be further illustrated by considering alternate editing choices. Since there is no *prima facie* reason to place *ealle* at the end of 9b, such as a manuscript point following the word or a compelling metrical scansion, one might consider shifting it forward to the beginning of 10a: *ealle fægere þurh forðgesceaft*.⁷ Because this arrangement is not an emendation it requires no special justification; it is simply an editing decision about a half-line break with no manuscript authority either way. Does the newly-expanded 10a have more to recommend it? Although like the expanded 9b it is anomalous among hypermetric verses in the corpus of Old English, metrical theory would allow it, and it would scan in Bliss's system as a type 3B*1b(2B1). It would roughly resemble *þæt mæg wites tō wearninga* (Christ III, 921a), Bliss type 3B*1b(2C1).⁸ The expanded 10a also brings *ealle* into the half-line with the word it modifies, *fægere* (as the syntax is construed in the translation by Clayton given above); while the word order does not change, the collocation of *ealle fægere* in the same half-line may add to the clarity of the phrase. However, the lack of stress on *ealle* is problematic because the usual practice in *The Dream of the Rood* is to place an inflected *ealle* in

⁴ Some late verse allows final alliteration, but even here the parallels are inexact and few; see Bredehoft 2005: 91–8. On alliteration as a foundational principle see Terasawa 2011: 3–26.

⁵ See in particular Bredehoft's rules on alliteration for each of the three kinds of hypermetric verses and the concluding observation that hypermetric verses "function in concert with the rules for normal verses," which would preclude alliteration on the final stressed syllable of an off-verse. For an earlier discussion see Sievers 1893: §§93–4.

⁶ Fulk (2001: 68, n. 29) and Pope (1967: 111) are notable exceptions.

⁷ Fulk (2001: 68) implicitly recognizes the arbitrary choice of assigning *ealle* to 9b or 10a, since it "disrupts the meter" either way.

⁸ My comparanda exclude the hypermetric half-lines in *Genesis B*. Note that *fægere* scans as two syllables whether the root vowel is long or short; see the entry for *fæger* in the glossary of Fulk 2001.

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a position of metrical stress with alliteration, while uninflected *eall* never receives metrical stress. The following passage illustrates each kind:⁹

Hwæt mē þā geweorðode wuldres Ealdor	90
ofer holm-wudu, heofon-rices Weard,	
swylce swā hē his mōdor ēac, Marian sylfe,	
æلميhtig God for ealle men	
geweorðode ofer eall wīfa cynn!	94

The words in question fall in consecutive lines. Both are adjectives modifying a noun, but the one with an inflected ending carries the alliteration while the other lacks metrical stress. The case of *ealle* – whether placed in 9b or 10a – stands out as an exception to this pattern in *The Dream of the Rood* because neither alternative alliterates and one lacks stress. The point of this excursus is not to champion a change in the half-line boundary between 9b and 10a. It is rather to point out how a choice to preserve *ealle* requires an arbitrary preference of one lineation over the other. The reasons for placing *ealle* in 10a are no less compelling (and slightly less problematic) than the reasons for placing it at the end of 9b, and yet editors who preserve the manuscript reading implicitly consider a metrically faulty 9b a superior reading over a metrically faulty 10a. Neither half-line provides a good home for *ealle*.

Some editors of *Dream*, recognizing the metrical implausibility of the manuscript reading, have proposed emendations that target each word in the phrase *engel dryhtnes ealle*. Three proposals are presented below for the sake of comparison:

behēoldon þær engeldryhta fela (Pope 1981)¹⁰
“many hosts of angels looked on there”

behēold on þām engel dryhtnes (Fulk 2001)
“an angel of the Lord watched them [the five jewels]”

behēoldon þær engeldryhte (Dickins and Ross 1966; Fulk 2014)
“hosts of angels observed there”

One thing all of these have in common is the elimination of *ealle*. They are also all hypermetric verses.¹¹ Each one makes the angel or angels the subject of the verb of gazing.

⁹ Elsewhere in *Dream*: 37b, 58b, 74a, 93b, 128b. The uninflected *eall* is always unstressed: 6b, 12b, 20b, 48b, 62b, 82b, 94b. An exception is *eallum* 154a, although note the possible transverse alliteration with *ær*. The following passage is quoted from Clayton’s edition, with macrons added.

¹⁰ Pope first proposed the emended half-line in *The Rhythm of Beowulf* (1966: 101) and later incorporated it into *Seven Old English Poems* (1981: 9). A note in Bright 1971: 311 summarizes various proposals, including some not discussed here.

¹¹ Pope’s emended verse calls for treating *engel* as a monosyllable to yield Bliss type a1(3B); see Fulk 1992: §95. The others scan as Bliss type a1(2A), with *engel* as disyllabic.

The remainder of this study argues that *engel* should be understood not as an angel but rather as the cross itself.¹² In doing so it questions the equivalence, implied in some studies, between Modern English “angel” and the Old English meaning of *engel*. Because a word with a history as long as *engel*/angel will inevitably see semantic shifts over time, it is worth considering its connotations for the early audience of *The Dream of the Rood*.

The systematic study of angels has a long history in Jewish and Christian theology, which need not concern us here except to review the early history of the word as it moved from its pre-Christian Greek meaning to a word identifying the celestial beings at the service of the Judeo-Christian God. Whether Old English *engel* ultimately was a borrowing from Latin or from Greek is not certain, but its phonology is consistent with an early common Germanic borrowing from Greek. As Campbell notes, “OE *engel* angel, is from Gmc. **angil-*, in which unaccented *-el-* (cf. Gr. ἄγγελος) > Gmc. *-il-*, which causes umlaut, and appears in OE as *-el-*, as in native words.”¹³ If, as Campbell suggests, ἄγγελος was borrowed early enough to enter West Germanic, the word would have arrived in Britain as part of the language spoken by the earliest Germanic migrants. Not only would *engel* have anticipated the arrival of Latin *angelus* after the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, but its primary meaning would likely be ‘messenger’ without reference to a celestial being, since most Germanic people were not yet Christian.

Not long after their conversion Anglo-Saxons had the extraordinary opportunity to study Greek under Theodore of Tarsus, who assumed his duties as archbishop of Canterbury in 669, and Hadrian, who became abbot of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul (later St Augustine). Both native speakers of Greek, they established a school in Canterbury that attracted Aldhelm and many others (Lapidge 1988). Bede also gained some familiarity with Greek, although it seems he was self-taught (Lynch 1983). Even if *engel* had already entered the language through a common Germanic borrowing and carried the meaning ‘messenger,’ these students would certainly appreciate its similarity with ἄγγελος. If *engel* was borrowed from Latin in the years soon after conversion, the scholarly knowledge of Greek may have shaped its earliest uses, especially in written sources. Anglo-Saxons without Greek but with enough Latin to consult Isidore knew that

¹² An idea advanced by Bolton 1968. I depart from Bolton in a number of specifics, especially his discussion of meter. Other studies of this passage that I draw from for this discussion include Helder 1975; Boenig 1985; Cavill 1992; McGillivray 2005; Ó Carragáin 2005: 325–7; Hawtree 2013.

¹³ Campbell 1964: §492. The evidence is equivocal, however; see also Campbell §495, especially Latin *mantellum* and *calicem* > OE *mentel* and *celc*. More generally on the borrowing of *engel* into early Germanic languages, see Feulner 2000: 215–19.

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engel corresponded to Latin *angelus* as well as Greek ἄγγελος. Isidore's entry on *angels* draws out some useful distinctions:

Angels (*angelus*) are so called in Greek (i.e. ἄγγελος); they are *malachoth* in Hebrew, but translated in Latin as "messengers" (*nuntius*) because they announce (*nuntiare*) the will of God to people. The term for angels is thus the name of their function, not of their nature. Indeed they are always spirits, but when they are commissioned [*mittuntur*] they are called angels.¹⁴

As if in anticipation of Isidore, Jerome's Vulgate bible maintains a similar distinction. In working from the Septuagint and Hebrew sources, in which the Greek ἄγγελος or Hebrew *mal'akh* could refer either to the celestial being or a more mundane messenger, Jerome prefers *angelus* for the former and *nuntius* (or less frequently *legatus*) for the latter (Kosior 2013: 57–9.) The distinctions observed in different ways by Jerome and Isidore were carried over – at least in an attenuated way – into Old English translations. When Luke, for example, introduces the scene that has come to be known as the Annunciation, Jerome's Latin is *missus est angelus Gabriel a Deo* (Luke 1:26), which the translator of the Old English Gospels dutifully renders as *wæs asende gabriel se engel from drihtne* (Liuzza 1994: vol. 1, 99). By comparison the versified *Apostle's Creed* refers to the same event with the phrase *þone Gabriel, Godes ærend-raca* (Jones 2012: 82, line 9). In the Blickling Homily on the Annunciation, Gabriel is called *ærendwreca* in four passages, two of which use *se heofonlica ærendwreca* (Morris 1967: 3, 7, 9).¹⁵ When he visits Mary, Gabriel is God's messenger in a rather obvious and traditional way, but that obviousness is part of the point of the comparison, because the easy movement between *engel* and *ærend-wraca* supports the idea that the Anglo-Saxons were familiar with Isidore's distinction between nature and function, between *angelus* and *nuntius*. I will return later to this topic.

In the specific case of *Dream 9b*, a number of studies have brought to light patristic sources illuminating the phrase *engel dryhtnes*. Bolton, quoting Augustine's commentary on the famous verse from the gospel of John: *Non est propheta sine honore, nisi in patria sua* (John 4:44), draws out the equivalence between Christ and angel. According to Augustine,

¹⁴ Translation Barney et al. 2006: 160. Latin from Isidore 1911: 7.3.5: *Angeli Graece vocantur, Hebraice malachoth, Latine vero nuntii interpretantur, ab eo quod Domini voluntatem populis nuntiant. Angelorum autem vocabulum officii nomen est, non naturae. Semper enim spiritus sunt, sed cum mittuntur, vocantur angeli*. Isidore uses the feminine plural *malachoth*, although the Hebrew would call for the masculine plural *malachim*. My thanks to Zohar Shalita-Keinan for this information. My thanks also to the editors, the anonymous reader, Samantha Berstler, and Erica Weaver for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

¹⁵ A similar constellation can be generated using the root *boda*. For example in *Christ I* Gabriel is called *godes spelboda* (Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 12, line 336).

Christ is the Lord of angels (*Dominus anglorum*), not because he is by nature an angel but through the message he delivers to mankind as a *legatus* or *nuntius*. Like Jerome and Isidore, Augustine distinguishes between nature and function. I reproduce here the larger passage from which Bolton quotes:

Sic autem propheta Christus, Dominus Prophetarum; sicut angelus Christus, Dominus Angelorum. Nam et ipse dictus est magni consilii Angelus [Isaiah 9:6, *Vetus Latina*]. Verumtamen alibi quid dicit propheta? Quia non legatus neque angelus, sed ipse veniens salvos faciet eos [Is. 35:4]: id est, ad salvos eos faciendos non mittet legatum, non mittet angelum, sed veniet ipse. Quis veniet? Ipse angelus. Certe non per angelum, nisi quia iste sic angelus, ut etiam Dominus Angelorum. Etenim Angeli latine nuntii sunt. Si Christus nihil annuntiaret, angelus non diceretur: si Christus nihil prophetaret, propheta non diceretur.¹⁶

As Bolton comments, “Christ is an angel because He is a *nuntius*, not because He is a member of the celestial hosts called angels” (1968: 165). Building on Augustine’s careful distinctions, Bolton triangulates among Christ, cross, and angel to argue that just as Christ is an angel in his role as *nuntius*, so the cross is an *engel* in its role as a messenger, which it dramatically demonstrates when it speaks to the dreamer later in the poem. Ó Carragáin and others have pointed out that the phrase Augustine quotes from Isaiah, *magni consilii Angelus* (*Vetus Latina*), is incorporated into the Introit of one of the Masses on Christmas Day, which he translates: “A child is born to us, and a son is given to us: whose power is on his shoulder: and his name shall be called the messenger [*Angelus*] of great counsel” (Ó Carragáin 2005: 325).¹⁷ One might quibble with Ó Carragáin in his repeated assertion that the cross “identif[ies]” with Christ in *Dream*, which seems to go beyond similarity to imply an equation between the two, as if Christ and the cross are somehow identical (Ó Carragáin 2005: 325).¹⁸ Nevertheless, these studies show that between the patristic exegesis and the liturgical references, the rich associations between Christ and *angelus/nuntius* could find their way to a more general audience, and by extension the

¹⁶ “But Christ is a prophet insofar as he is the Lord of prophets; just as Christ is an angel as the Lord of angels. For indeed he has also been called the Angel of great counsel [Is 9:6]. But what does the prophet say elsewhere? Since he was neither an ambassador nor an angel, he himself will come and will save them [Is 35:4]; that is, he will not send an ambassador nor will he send an angel, but he himself will come. Who will come? The Angel himself. Certainly not by means of [another] angel, for he himself is an angel insofar as he is the Lord of angels. For angels are ‘messengers’ in Latin. If Christ announced nothing, he would not be called an angel; if Christ prophesied nothing, he would not be called a prophet.” The translation is mine.

¹⁷ Latin from Ó Carragáin: *Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis: cuius imperium super humerum eius: et vocabitur nomen eius, magni consilii Angelus*. See also McGillivray 2005.

¹⁸ Similarly 326, 327. It is doubtful whether Ó Carragáin intends an identity in the strict sense for the close relation between the two.

cross in the *Dream of the Rood* might assume the angelic function as a messenger.

The scenario above assumes that the meaning of ‘messenger’ had to be created or reinforced, but was that meaning already present in Old English *engel*? As compelling as the Latin references are, they leave open the question of whether the *Dream*’s audience required such learning to perceive the association between cross, angel, and messenger.¹⁹ As a loanword, did it carry connotations of ‘messenger’ from its Greek root?²⁰ Or was it something that could be perceived only by clerics with enough Latin to know their way around Isidore, Augustine, and the liturgy? As a rough parallel we might consider Old English *gōd-spell* as a well-known calque of Latin *ev-angeli-*, which itself is a loan from Greek with the same root as ἄγγελος. In this case whoever created the Old English calque knew the Greek etymology behind the Latin word, because the Old English leapfrogs the Latin (as it were) to εὐ-ἄγγελος.²¹ The result is that the morphology of *gōd-spell* mirrors the Greek morphemes, and “good message” would be foremost in the connotations of the word, as Ælfric emphasizes at the start of a homily with a flourish of alliterative word-play:

Sume menn nyton gewiss, for heora nytennysse,
hwi *godspell* is gecweden, oþþe hwæt *godspell* gemæne;
godspell is witodlice Godes sylfes lar,
and ða word þe he spræc on þissere worulde,
mancynne to lare and to rihtum geleafan;
and þæt is swyðe *god spell*.²²

Some people because of their ignorance do not know with certainty why the *gospel* is so called or what *gospel* means; the *gospel* is assuredly the teaching of God himself, and those words that he spoke on this earth as doctrine for mankind and for true faith; and that is a very good message.

Presumably because Ælfric’s explanation is so unambiguous, the *Dictionary of Old English* gives this passage pride of place as the first

¹⁹ McGillivray (2005: 1) is right to question whether the *Dream*’s audience might recognize the patristic allusions.

²⁰ Throughout this essay I use “connotation” in a deliberately vague way to refer to a meaning that is available immediately and not by figurative extension like a metaphor.

²¹ Holthausen 1963 defines it “frohe Botschaft, Evangelium.” The DOE gives as Latin equivalents *evangelium*; *bonum nuntium*, *lectio de evangelio* but this need not mean *gōd-spell* was derived from any of them. The OED’s etymology summarizes *gōd-spell* as “a rendering of the Latin *bona adnuntiatio* (*Corpus Gloss. Int.* 117) or *bonus nuntius* (*Euangelium*, id est, *bonum nuntium*, *godspel*, *Voc.* c1050 in Wright-Wülcker 314/8), which was current as an explanation of the etymological sense of Latin *evangelium*, Greek εὐαγγέλιον.” One might question whether the immediate source for *gōd-spell* was a Latin phrase or a more direct rendering of *evangelium*/εὐαγγέλιον. See also Isidore 1911: 7.ii.40; Barney et al. 2006: 157.

²² The homily for the fifth Sunday after Easter in Pope 1967–8: vol. I, 357. Relevant words are highlighted here and in the DOE entry. The translation is mine.

illustrative quotation under the headword *god-spell*. It would not take special learning for Ælfric's audience to understand: the concluding "it is very a good message" drives home the point. The DOE's second citation is no less clear, from Ælfric's *Glossary*: *euangelium, id est, bonum nuntium, godspel*. Today, by contrast, the etymological associations have been obscured in the current pronunciation and spelling of "gospel."

Because *engel* is a loanword, whether from Greek or Latin, its morphology would reveal nothing about its connotations of 'messenger' to any but the most educated speakers of Old English. Most instances of *engel* in the corpus of Old English refer to the celestial being, occasionally in phrases with a dependent genitive like *Godes engel* and *dryhtnes engel*, as the citations under the first sense of the DOE entry make clear. When the position of the genitive is reversed *engel* can also be used in epithets for the deity, such as *engla God* and *engla dryhten* (primarily in poetry).²³ The DOE gives two citations drawing a direct equivalence between *engel* and Latin *nuntius*. Both are glosses, the first of which is found in the Lindisfarne Gospels and dated by Ker to the second half of the tenth century: *angelus id est nuntius appellatur / engel þæt is erenwreca bið genemned*. The second is from the Antwerp Glossaries, dated by Ker to the first half of the eleventh century: *angelus vel nuntius / encgel*.²⁴ Even though these two are products of the scriptorium they support the idea that *engel* could carry connotations of 'messenger' more broadly to speakers of Old English.²⁵

On the other hand the distinction between function (messenger) and nature (angel) found in Augustine, Jerome, and Isidore can be preserved in other ways. One interesting example appears under the headword *ærendwraça* in the DOE (sense A.4), which itemizes glosses on a verse from Psalm 77:49 that speaks of violence inflicted *per angelos malos*.²⁶ This phrase seems to have given glossators pause because it implies a class of evil angels (separate from devils as fallen angels), which may have seemed a doctrinally suspect category. Seven of the glossators went ahead with forms of *engel*, while five finessed the issue by turning to forms of *ærendwraça*, such as *þurh ærndracan yuele* in the Salisbury Psalter. It is another choice between function and nature: in this case the problematic nature of angels as evil spirits.

²³ Headword *engel* in the DOE; sense 1. and 1.a.

²⁴ Both are given under sense 2 under the headword *engel* in the DOE. For the Lindisfarne Gospel gloss see Skeat 1887: 2; for Antwerp see Kindschi 1955: 162. For the dating see Ker 1977: §2 and §165.

²⁵ There is a similar use of *boda* in phrases like *godes boda* to refer to angels (see DOE sense 3). When *nuntius* is glossed in Old English, however, it is most often with forms of *ærendwreca*, *boda*, or *bydel*, and rarely *engel*. Results obtained from the "Word Wheel" search of the Old English corpus. <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/doccorpus/wordwheel.html>

²⁶ Under sense A.4, PsGIK, which quotes the gloss from Sisam and Sisam 1959: 185.

There are other kinds of passages showing a close association between angel and messenger. In the passage of the Old English *Genesis A* recounting the story of the angel sent to Hagar, the poem translates *angelus Domini* (Gen. 16:7 and 16:9) variously as *wuldres þegn*, *engel drihtnes*, *se engel*, *se hālga*, and *godes ærend-gāst* (Doane 2013: lines 2268, 2269, 2280, 2297, and 2298), all of which are appropriate in context, but the only function singled out is *ærend-gāst*.²⁷ During Belshazzar's feast in the book of *Daniel* disembodied fingers appear and write on the wall (*apparuerunt digiti quasi manus hominis scribentis*, Dan 5:5), which the poet of the Old English *Daniel* transforms by assigning the hand to an angel of the Lord, *engel drihtnes lēt his hand cuman* (Krapp 1931: lines 720b–1a), apparently because of the function of the hand, not its nature.²⁸ When Christ speaks to the crowds concerning John the Baptist, he quotes from the prophet Malachi, "Ecce: ego mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeperabit viam tuam ante te" (Matt 11:10; Mal 3:1). The Old English gospel translates the word as *engyl* even though in Christ's use *angelum* veers close to the meaning 'messenger' because of John's role as a prophet (Liuzza 1994: vol. 1, 22). John is an angel solely by function.

This brief survey supports the idea that Anglo-Saxons were capable of including connotations of 'messenger' as part of the meaning of *engel*. To put this in some perspective, it seems that 'messenger' is only faintly associated with the word "angel" in the ordinary use of English today, because more than a thousand years of semantic change stands between the poem's *engel* and our "angel." *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2000), for example, gives as its first definition "A typically benevolent celestial being that acts as an intermediary between heaven and earth, especially in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism." Aside from the vague "intermediary," there is no mention in this or any of the other four senses of an angel's a function as messenger. If we were to ask English speakers today – let us imagine college students taking a course with *Dream of the Rood* on the syllabus – what they understood by the word "angel," I strongly suspect the defining features would have more to do with their nature (celestial being), than their function. And if the students and I brainstormed about angels' function, "messenger" might be lost among others, such as praising God, protecting individuals in the role of "guardian angel," fighting against the forces of the devil, escorting Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, avenging, granting mercy, killing (angel of death), etc. Even if students do not know the long tradition behind the nine orders of angels, they might know

²⁷ The Old English poet omits the passage from 16:13, *Vocavit autem nomen Domini qui loquebatur ad eam*, in which Hagar addresses the messenger as the Lord. See Helder 1975: 148.

²⁸ The *Genesis* and *Daniel* examples are discussed by Cavill 1992: 289.

of more than one kind (archangels, seraphim, etc.) and therefore infer more than one function. My hypothetical survey of students is in no way an indictment of their hypothetical command of the language; it simply illustrates how the connotations of “angel” have multiplied among English speakers in general. By contrast, the evidence in the Old English corpus suggests that *engel* was not burdened with such a complex history in the vernacular, and ‘messenger’ was more prominent in its meaning. The connotations were strengthened, not created, among Anglo-Saxons with enough learning to know the word’s Latin and Greek roots from sources like Augustine and Isidore.

The first part of this discussion of *Dream* 9b has shown that an emendation removing the suspect *ealle* is justifiable. Not only is the meter improved but it preserves the basic meaning of the passage as it stands:

Behēoldon þær engel dryhtnes
fægere þurh forð-gesceaft.

Without further emendations there are three possibilities for what *engel* might mean. It might be a heavenly angel, but if so this would be a surprising introduction (for so early in the poem) of a single angel performing a special office, not supported by any tradition known to me. The *gāstas* in the phrase *behēoldon halige gāstas* (11) include angels who look upon the cross as well as the blessed souls of the saved.²⁹ Why introduce a single angel before this? Furthermore, if we accept the manuscript’s *be heoldon* as the plural verb *behēoldon* in 9b (as most editions do), it would rule out *engel* as its subject without further emendation.³⁰ The second possibility for *engel* is Christ, which is unlikely for several reasons. First, Christ has not yet been introduced into the poem (*frēan mancynnes* appears in line 33) and at this point the dreamer’s vision is of the cross alone.³¹ Second, as discussed above in the context of the quotation from Augustine, the strong association between Christ and the role of angel as messenger falls short of establishing an identity between the nature of an angel and the divine nature. Third, although Bolton points to three other passages in poetry that use *engel* to refer to Christ, the parallels are inexact.³² In two of them *engel* is used in apposition with unambiguous epithets (*waldend* and *metod ælmihtig*), and the third begins *Ēalā earendel, engla beorhtast* in a highly figurative and

²⁹ Unlike Pope (1981: 64) or Mitchell and Robinson (2012: 266) I see no reason to limit *gāstas* to angels. See the DOE entry for *gāst*, sense 10 and various sub-senses.

³⁰ Fulk (2001) emends to *behēold on þām engel dryhtnes*; he notes that the *beheold on* is written as two words in the manuscript, p. 68. Sievers (1893: §96) emends to *englas*, as does Cook (1905).

³¹ A point also made by Fulk (2001: 68); Bolton (1968: 164); and Cavill (1992: 288).

³² The passages are *Christ and Satan* 585; *Soul and Body* I 27; and *Christ* I 104. See Cavill 1992: 289.

conventional passage describing Christ as the rising sun, *oriens*. None of them makes an unqualified identification of Christ as an angel, as the passage in *Dream* would apparently do. Certain epithets such as *waldend*, *metod*, or *hælend* single out one divine feature in which the part stands for the whole, but *engel* has no currency as a synecdoche for God or Christ in Old English. Finally, a literal reading of the phrase *engel dryhtnes* undercuts the identification of Christ as angel because at its most basic level it would mean the Lord is the angel of the Lord, which not even the most subtle theologian would venture to suggest. He is *engla dryhten*, not *engel dryhtnes*.

Instead of a celestial angel or Christ, *engel dryhtnes* in 9b refers to the cross in its function as a messenger.³³ Even before it begins to speak (line 28), its fantastic appearance abounds with signification for the dreamer as it projects powerful if contrasting images. It is a natural tree and a precious artifact; it is ordinary in size and yet it expands across creation; it is ornately decorated and blood-soaked in turn; it is a sign of victory and an implement of death. The genre of a dream vision enables such contradictions and inconsistencies because the usual conventions of time, space, logic, identity, cause-and-effect, and the like may be suspended, so the cross can be covered in gold and jewels in one moment and covered in gore the next. All of the fantastic features itemized by the narrator contribute to the *engel's* message even before it begins to speak.

So how to translate the passage? Each of the three emendations suggested earlier (Dickins and Ross, Pope, and Fulk) are plausible for the reasons each edition gives. On the other hand the simpler emendation of eliminating *ealle* and leaving the rest of the half-line intact has much to recommend it. The adjective *fægere* can be used substantively for “fair ones” or “beautiful ones” as the subject of *Behǽoldon*: “Those beautiful by eternal decree beheld there the *engel* of the Lord.”³⁴ The loss of *ealle* does not change the basic meaning from the translation proposed by Clayton, Baker, and Mitchell and Robinson (among others), but the very similarity in meaning between the emended and unemended readings suggests why a scribe may have added *ealle* in the first place. “Those beautiful by eternal decree” would include angels and the blessed souls who together make up the host of heaven in the cosmic vision, but the phrase *fægere þurh forð-gesceaft* is oblique, and a scribe may have wanted to clarify who the *fægere* are by adding *ealle*.

³³ With the notable exception of *ealle* this is similar to the interpretation finally advocated by Bolton and suggested as an option by Mitchell and Robinson (2012: 266n), Clayton (2013: 161), and Baker (2012: 246n).

³⁴ I turn to the translation of *engel* below. Alternatively we might follow a suggestion by Fulk (“... if [*fægere*] is not simply an adverb meaning tenderly” [2001: 69]) and leave the subject unexpressed in anticipation of the second *behǽoldon*, with its triple subject of blessed spirits, living people, and all creation (lines 11–12): “By eternal decree they courteously/graciously/tenderly beheld there the *engel* of the Lord.”

Whether it made the meaning any clearer for contemporary readers is impossible to say, but *ealle* entered the poem as a floating modifier unattached to the half-line before or after it.

To say that the cross is an angel to the extent that it functions as one fits comfortably within the rhetorical strategy of the first part of the poem, where the cross is identified consistently by figurative substitution. To use a simple example, *trēo* and *wudu* are metonyms of cross, as the material from which it is made. It is not literally a gallows (*gealga*) for criminals because its victim is not a criminal, but in other respects it is a gallows. A cross does not become a symbol (*beacen*) until it is incorporated into Christianity's system of symbols. The poem piles up figurative references to the cross in the first forty-three lines: *syllicre trēow* 4, *bēama beorhtost* 6a, *bēacen* 6b, *fracodes gealga* 10 (with negation), *sige-bēam* 13, *wuldres trēow* 14, *wealdendes trēow* 17 [MS *wealdes treow*], *þæt fīse bēacen* 21, *hælendes trēow* 25, *wudu sēlesta* 27, *gealgan hēanne* 40. This rhetorical indirection does not rise to the level of a riddle, in which an object speaking of itself uses oblique strategies to mislead – no one would mistake the cross for anything else – but it does resemble a riddle in refraining from direct identification (Orton 1980). It is not until a climactic moment in the self-narrative, after *geong hæleð – þæt wæs God ælmihtig* (39) mounts the *gealgan hēanne* (40), that the cross triumphantly identifies itself directly, *Rōd wæs ic āræred* (44), as if *rōd* is the culminating piece of its self-identification, or as if it earns the privilege to call itself *rōd* only after Christ's heroic action. The use of *engel* to refer to the cross fits within the rhetorical strategy of the first part of the poem because it requires us to allow its connotative meaning to assume the strength of a metaphor. The cross is an angel to the extent that it is a messenger, which is why I translate lines 9b–10a as “Those beautiful by eternal decree beheld there the messenger of the Lord.” Translating *engel* as “messenger” might strike some as tendentious because “angel” today preserves only the faintest connotations of messenger. I prefer “messenger” precisely because of that loss. To translate *engel* as “angel” sends the wrong message.

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The Fate of Lot's Wife: A 'Canterbury School' Gloss in *Genesis A*

Charles D. Wright

In the Old English *Genesis A*, the poet describes how Lot's wife was turned into a *sealtstān*, adding that she must remain in that place until the Lord decides her fate at the Last Judgment:

þā þæt fyrgebræc,
 lēoda lifgedāl, lōthes gehȳrde
 bryd on burgum, under bæc beseah
 wið þæs wælfylles. ūs gewritu secgað
 þæt heo on sealtstānes sōna wurde
 anlīcnesse. æfre siððan
 se monlīca, þæt is mære spell,
 still wunode þær hīe strang begeat
 wīte þæs hēo wordum wuldres þegna
 hȳran ne wolde. Nu sceal heard and stēap
 on þām wīcum wyrde bīdan,
 drihtnes dōmes hwonne dōgora rīm,
 woruld gewīte (ll. 2562b–74a, ed. Doane 2013: 261)

When Lot's wife heard that crash of fire among the cities, the parting from life of peoples, she looked back at the destruction. Writings tell us that she was immediately turned into a likeness of a stone of salt. Ever since, that human likeness (that is a famous tale) has stood motionless where the severe punishment befell her because she did not wish to obey the words of the thanes of glory. Now, hardened and projecting, she must await fate in that place, the judgment of the Lord when the count of days, the world passes away.

The Vulgate says that Lot's wife "was turned into a statue of salt" (*versa est in statuum salis*, Gen. 19:26), which the poet renders as *sealtstānes anlīcnes*.¹ OE *anlīcnes* can refer to a statue – as it does here insofar

¹ The main European Vetus Latina text type reads *columna* (Fischer 1951: 215, cit. Schwab 1989: 40 n. 131; *statua* and *staticulum* are also attested VL readings). I have used the term "pillar of salt" in my title as a concession to modern usage (deriving from the King James Bible), as indeed *sealtstān* is translated by Clark Hall and Meritt 1962, s.v.; Bosworth and Toller 1881–1921, s.v. *sealtstān* (ll.) more scrupulously define the word as "a stone formed of salt, a pillar of salt." The King James version translates the Septuagint reading στήλη,

as it corresponds to Vulgate *statua* – but always as a specification of its base meaning “likeness” or “image,” which designates a representation of something else.² Here it is a “likeness” made of *sealtstān* (material genitive), but also a “likeness” of a *sealtstān* (genitive of comparison), for it is not a natural formation. At the same time it is a *monlīca*, a “likeness” of what had been a human being.³ For medieval Christians the human was defined by the book of Genesis as “the image and likeness” of God (*Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, Gen. 1:26),⁴ and both Latin *imago* and *similitudo* were regularly translated by *anlicnes* in Old English.⁵ The disobedience of

which refers to a “commemorative stone block or pillar, monument, pillar” (Bauer and Danker 1957, s.v.). The corresponding Hebrew reading word *nʿs.īb* means “pillar” or “stela” only here (elsewhere it is used figuratively to mean a prefect or garrison); see Botterweck et al. 1974– : 9.526. On OE *sealtstān* and cognate words in other Germanic texts translating Gen. 19:26 see Kunz 1981: 131–3; Schwab 1989: 57–49. According to Schwab, this word conflates a tradition of expressing Lot’s wife’s hardening with words for “stone” (as in the Old Saxon *Genesis*, quoted below) with the biblically determined but in this context problematically soluble material salt; as Schwab also notes, however, OE *sealtstān* is attested in the sense “rock-salt” (Clark Hall and Meritt 1962, s.v.), and from ancient times the biblical story of Lot’s wife has often been associated etilogically with halite formations near the Dead Sea or on Mount Sodom.

² Cameron et al. 2007, s.v. *an-licnes*, properly cite this passage as an example of sense 2. “representation, image (of someone / something *gen.*); referring to a portrait, statue, etc.”; but even in this context *anlicnes* can also be an example of sense 1. “likeness, appearance, form (mainly with *gen.* of comparison)”; or of sense 1a. “by extension: form, shape, figure; *gestrynan sunu to his gelicnesse and anlicnesse* ‘to beget a son in one’s own likeness and image’ (of Adam begetting Seth; cf. sense 1.b).” The phrase “figmentum salis” in Wisdom 10:7 is usually translated “statue of salt,” but that sense in Latin is similarly a specification of the basic sense “a made thing,” and another of the word’s senses is again “image.”

³ The word *monlīca* here varies *anlicnesse*, but specifies the human visual form of the likeness. Bollerman 2013 suggests that *monlīca* represents the adj. *mānlīca* ‘infamous’ used substantively, “for two reasons: The first is that metrical stress suggests a long initial vowel, and the second derives from the obvious ironic juxtaposition, across the line, of the alliterating words – *monlīca*/infamous and *mære*/famous.” As Rob Fulk advises me (email of 30 June 2015, from which the following quotations are taken), this reading is unlikely. First, *monlīca* ‘human image’ is perfectly acceptable metrically: “The syllable *mon-* is heavy regardless of whether the vowel is long or short” (Fulk compares *and brimhlæste* 200b, *geond hronrāde* 205a, and *Þæs ste ælmihtig* 2254b). Second, although *mānlīca* would also scan acceptably, the spelling militates against that interpretation: “As it stands, the manuscript reading cannot be taken to mean ‘infamous’, since only the short *a* can be rounded to *o* in poetry, not the long one.” Scribal substitution is also unlikely, “since *o* for *a* is an Anglian feature, and whereas scribes commonly ‘Saxonize’ Anglian forms in verse, they do not generally substitute Anglian forms for WS ones.”

⁴ In one of the Canterbury glosses attributed to the School of Theodore and Hadrian (on which see below) this verse is interpreted as referring to the soul: Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 308–9 (Pentl 31). As I will argue, the *Genesis A* poet implies that the soul of Lot’s wife remains in the *sealtstān*, an idea he probably encountered in another Canterbury gloss. Waugh 2012: 91 suggests that Lot’s wife is also “both herself and a representation of herself at the same time, an object that is both an original and its copy – an antisimulacrum,” citing (194 n. 32) the sixth-century poem *Versus de Sodoma*, l. 120: *ipsa et imago sibi* (Morisi 1993: 58).

⁵ See Cameron et al. 2007, s.v. *anlicnes* 1.b: “especially with reference to Gen 1:27: *Godes anlicnes* ‘God’s image’; *æfter / tō Godes anlicnesse* ‘(created) according to / in God’s image’.”

Lot's wife has further refracted that originary and singular likeness of the divine into a nonhuman likeness of the human likeness of the divine. Like the Morton Salt girl, Lot's wife has been frozen in a mise-en-abyme of resemblance.

The gender of this displaced likeness, moreover, is also unstable – *sealtstān* and *monlīca* are both grammatically masculine, and *anlīcnes* is feminine, while the simplex *mon* is masculine but can designate individuals of either sex (Bollerman 2013). The *sealtstān* as a material object is of course sexless, but retains the likeness of a female body. The immediately following clauses use the feminine pronouns *hīe* and *hēo*, as if the nearest antecedent, *se monlīca*, and the sexless object it designates have incorporated the identity and gender of Lot's wife – as indeed they have.⁶

The poet, then, has deliberately mystified the ontological status of the *sealtstān* – it is neither a real pillar of salt nor a real human being, but a simulacrum of both; and it has a female form yet physiologically is neither masculine nor feminine, though grammatically both. The *sealtstān* is also indeterminate as to whether it is living or dead. It is motionless (*still*), so obviously not “animate”; yet if Lot's wife was transformed instantly (*sōna*), is she really dead?⁷ Or, if she is dead, did the instantaneous transformation prevent her soul from escaping what had been her body (which subsequently never decayed)? Yet that would violate the most basic definition of death, which in Antiquity and the Middle Ages was not the cessation of vital functions but the separation of the soul from the body⁸ (which, with the miraculous

Waugh 2012: 82–3 reads the word as “a figure or image: that is, an object with a particular message.”

⁶ Prudentius in his *Hamartigenia* similarly juxtaposes neuter *saxum* and feminine *mulier*: “saxumque liquabile facta / stat mulier, sicut steterat prius, omnia servans / caute sigillati longum salis effigiata ...” (“turned into soluble rock she stands there a woman still, as she had stood before, preserving every detail modelled in a pillar of salt that has long borne her image ...”); ll. 743–5, Thompson 1949: 1.256–7.

⁷ Irenaeus – who exceptionally regarded Lot's wife as a type of the Church rather than an example of disobedience, curiosity, double-mindedness, or other vices – implies that she is alive and even continues to menstruate: “uxor remanserat in Sodomis, iam non caro corruptibilis sed statua salis semper manens et per naturalia ea, quae sunt consuetudinis hominis ostendens ...” (*Adversus Haereses* 4.31.3, Rousseau et al. 1965: = PL 7, 1070), where the word *naturalia* refers to the sexual organs: see Orbe 1994: 56, n. 67. The anonymous author of the *Versus de Sodoma* states quite plainly that she is said to remain living (*dicitur et uiuens*) and continues to menstruate (ll. 125–6, Morisi 1993: 60; see Bertolini 1990). Elsewhere (e.g. Prudentius, *Hamartigenia*, l. 749, Thompson 1949: 1.256) the statue is said to “sweat” salt (see Schwab 1989: 36–7).

⁸ The word *lifgedal* (l. 2563a; cf. *(e)aldorgedal* ll. 1071b, 1959a) means “the parting from life” or “the parting with respect to life,” i.e. that of the body and soul, as the *Genesis A* poet defines death in lines 930b–31a: “þe is gedāl witod / lices and sǣwle” (in ll. 2278–9 and 2649b–41a, death is described as the removal of the soul from the heart or breast); cf. *gästgedal*, l. 1127a. Death is defined as the separation of the soul from the body already in Plato, *Phaedo* 64C. For further examples in OE with Christian-Latin parallels, see Klaeber 1996: 39–40.

exception of uncorrupted saintly bodies, invariably returns to dust, as per Gen. 3:19).⁹

The metaphysical fluidity of the *sealtstān* is belied by its physical hardness and stasis. A product of dramatic and instantaneous change at the precise moment that Lot's wife's forward movement was checked by her backward look, the *sealtstān* thereafter remains changeless and motionless as long as time itself lasts. And by stating that she/it will await God's judgment in that place, the poet ascribes to the *sealtstān* continuing moral responsibility for the woman's disobedience, and thereby asserts the stable *identity* of the *sealtstān* and the person it once was. Yet inanimate objects cannot bear the guilt or punishment of sin and they are not judged by God – only human souls reunited with human bodies. The inanimate *sealtstān*, in other words, must still contain the soul of Lot's wife.¹⁰

The *Genesis A* poet's eschatological gloss to the story of Lot's wife is unbiblical, though a very literal reading of Wisdom 10:7, "a monument of an unbelieving soul" (*incredibilis animae memoria*), might generate the idea that her soul was in the pillar of salt. Many authorities both Jewish and Christian did affirm that the pillar of salt remains "until this day," and some even claimed to have seen it.¹¹ Such claims may have prompted the statement in the Old Saxon *Vatican Genesis* that Lot's wife remains there as a permanent wonder:

Thuo uuard siu an them berega gistuod endi under bak besach
Thuo uuard siu te stēne. thar siu standan scal
mannum te mārthu obar middilgard
after *te* êuandage sô langô so thius erda lêbot. (ll. 334–7, ed. Doane 1991: 252)

When she stood at the mountain and looked back, then she was turned to stone. There she must stand as a wonder to men throughout the earth perpetually as long as this earth lasts.

⁹ The paradoxical quality of Lot's wife "death" gave rise to a number of popular riddles. "Who having had father and mother, is not dead like other mortals? (Lot's wife)": Thompson 1955–8, motif no. H815; "Quis homo qui mortuus est, nec sepultus, nec putredinem habuit carnis?": *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*, ed. Bayless and Lapidge 1998: 136 (no. 126), with parallels cited in their commentary at 229. That Lot's wife was not buried but became her own grave is stated already in the *Versus de Sodoma*, ll. 118–19 (Morisi 1993: 58; cf. Kunz 1981: 130).

¹⁰ Waugh 2012: 94 seems to draw the same conclusion: "The mentioning of the end of time, of her awaiting her fate ... imply that Loth's wife exists in a state of suspended animation."

¹¹ As in Prudentius (n. 6 above). In Wisdom 10:7 the phrase "stans ... figmentum salis" implies that the statue is still standing. Examples are conveniently assembled by Hexter 1988: 19–23, with further secondary literature. An additional example is the Hiberno-Latin "Reference Bible," MacGinty 2002: 137, which also ascribes to "Ebrei" the idea that the statue melts by night and is renewed by day, and that it waxes and wanes with the moon (on these traditions see Schwab 1989: 36; Sysling 1996: 95–6 and n. 29).

In the *Vatican Genesis* the eschatological consequences for Lot's wife may be implicit in the allusion to the duration (and therefore the conclusion) of the earth's existence, but the *Genesis A* poet states explicitly that she is awaiting God's judgment in that place.

The idea that Lot's wife was to remain in the pillar of salt and await the Last Judgment there is found in the Palestinian Targums to the Pentateuch, which date from the late second to early third century CE: "And she remains a pillar of salt until the time of the resurrection of the dead" (Klein 1980: 215) or "until the day on which the dead shall live again" (Sysling 1996: 95, 101).¹² According to Harry Sysling, "this thought occurs nowhere else: it is not found in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, nor in the early Christian documents, nor in rabbinic literature" (1996: 101). A story in the Ethiopic apocryphon *The Book of the Cock* does, however, seem to depend upon this tradition. In this work, written probably originally in Greek and dating from the fifth or sixth century,¹³ Jesus escapes from Saul, who is leading him as a prisoner to the Temple court, and hides in the Temple portico. A woman related to Judas reveals him, and to punish her Jesus turns her to stone, telling her that she will remain in that place until the Last Day, when he will return to pronounce judgment upon her. The writer then affirms that she remains there in the middle of the street in Jerusalem "until today" (6:14, Piovanelli 2005: 183, who refers to Gen. 19:26). There is no explicit mention of Lot's wife, but the parallel is unmistakable, and the statement that this woman will remain there until the Last Judgment agrees closely with the eschatological gloss to the story of Lot's wife in the Palestinian Targums – one of several indications of the text's contacts with Jewish learning (Piovanelli 2003: 442–4, 446, 449).¹⁴

We do not have to speculate as to how this idea might have reached Anglo-Saxon England, for it recurs in the biblical glosses attributed to the "Canterbury School" of Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury (from 668 until his death in 690) and his colleague Hadrian, abbot of SS Peter and Paul (d. 710). These glosses "represent the written record, by one or more students, of *viva voce* explanations given by Theodore and Hadrian as the texts of the Pentateuch and gospels were being studied under their direction at Canterbury" (Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 267). They survive in an eleventh-century Italian manuscript (Milan,

¹² According to Sysling 1996: 101, the statement occurs in all the Palestinian Targums except for Pseudo-Yonatan. For the date of the Palestinian Targums, see Flesher and Chilton 2011: 80–1.

¹³ For the date, see Piovanelli 2003: 451; for (onomastic) evidence of a Greek original see 430, n. 10 and 449 n. 71, but the Ethiopic text was certainly translated from Arabic (428 and n. 2).

¹⁴ The story appears to reflect a more specific but unexplained tradition attested in Targum Pseudo-Yonatan, according to which Lot's wife had sinned by revealing or betraying a poor man (see Sysling 1996: 100).

Biblioteca Ambrosiana, M. 79 sup.) in the form of four sets of glosses: on the Pentateuch and gospels (PentI + EvII); on Genesis, Exodus, and the gospels (Gn-Ex-EvIa); on the Pentateuch, on Joshua through Esra and Nehemiah, and on the gospels (PentII + OT glosses (Iosua – Nehemiah) + EvI); and on the Pentateuch (PentIII) (Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 284–7).¹⁵ In the second commentary on the gospels we find the following explanation of Luke 17:32 (*memores estote uxoris Loth*):

Vxoris Loth [Lk. 17:32]. ... A nonnullis autem orientalium doctorum aestimatur anima ipsius in ea usque ad diem iudicii permansura.

Lot's wife Her soul is thought by some of the eastern Fathers to remain in her until the Day of Judgement. (EvII 115, Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 416–17)

The feminine pronoun *ea* can only refer materially to the *statua* that Lot's wife became, as there was no other body that her soul could have remained in. The gloss, which continues by comparing her unusual case with that of the Seven Sleepers,¹⁶ is repeated in two Continental manuscripts related to the "Leiden family" glossaries that also transmit teachings from the School of Canterbury: Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 47 (s. viii ex., Germany), which omits the comparison with the Seven Sleepers (Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 557, no. 98),¹⁷ and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14470 (s. viii/ix, Bavaria) (Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 559–60, no. 1).¹⁸ Though not attributed *nominatim* to Theodore, the fact that the gloss reports a tradition of "eastern Fathers" strongly suggests that it derives from Theodore's teachings.

The Canterbury gloss is more explicit than the Targums or *Genesis A* in specifying that Lot's wife's soul was not separated from the statue, but their assertion that she will remain there until the resurrection of the dead, or until the judgment of God at the end of time, already

¹⁵ The nature of the evidence for their derivation from the School of Canterbury varies from collection to collection; in EvII, the relevant set here, both Theodore and Hadrian "are frequently cited by name" (Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 286). Bischoff and Lapidge edit PentI, Gn-Ex-EvIa, and EvII; Vaciago 2004: 1.1–224 edits PentI, II, III (his A^a, A^b, A^c) and OT Glosses (Josua – Nehemiah) (his A^d), as well as an additional set headed "Apostrofa glosarum per precedentes libros" (his A^e) whose affiliations are uncertain (see Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 285–6), though Pfeifer 1995: 316–33 shows that this set was also laid under contribution in several Leiden family glossaries.

¹⁶ On the Seven Sleepers legend see the commentary in Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 527–30. It was very popular in Anglo-Saxon England: see Magennis 1994 and 1996; Joy 2011.

¹⁷ On the manuscript, whose final three folios contain two sets of gospel glosses related to the Canterbury commentaries and Leiden family glossaries, see Lowe 1936–72: 9.49 (no. 1414); digital facsimile at <<http://vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mpthf47/ueber.html>>.

¹⁸ On the manuscript, which contains just three entries from EvII, see Bischoff 1974: 1.246 (where the manuscript is dated s. ix in.) and 1998–2014: 2.258 (no. 3212); digital facsimile at <<http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0002/bsb00022361/images/>>.

implies as much. While motifs of this kind can rarely be traced to a specific source, I think that Theodore can be regarded as the ultimate if not the direct source for the *Genesis A* poet's comment, whether through some written form of the Canterbury gloss itself or through oral instruction, whether by Theodore himself or by one of his Anglo-Saxon students. The gloss transmits a rare Jewish and Eastern Christian exegetical motif that is most unlikely to have been known in Anglo-Saxon England independently of Theodore's teachings.¹⁹ The Canterbury gloss attributes the idea to "some" (*nonulli*) eastern teachers,²⁰ so it may have had a wider dissemination in Greek and/or Syriac tradition. Further examples may turn up, but probably none so proximate to *Genesis A* as the Canterbury glosses in both time and place.

That the eastern *doctores* whom the Canterbury gloss invokes had adopted the motif from the Palestinian Targums is entirely plausible, for as Wayne A. Meeks and R. L. Wilken (1978: 21) have stated, "exegesis depending ultimately on Jewish models becomes a hallmark of the Antiochene school" to which Theodore adhered, while distancing himself from certain doctrinal positions associated especially with Theodore of Mopsuestia (Stevenson 1995: 68, n. 30 and 41–3). The Syriac centers of Edessa and Nisibis, according to Jane Stevenson, "drew on rich and complex Semitic traditions which developed simultaneously into Rabbinic Jewish techniques of study and exegesis of the Talmud, and into the related Syriac Christian school of exegesis" (1995: 68). Theodore, who may have studied in Antioch as well as Constantinople and had almost certainly visited Edessa (Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 14–37 and 41–64; also Lapidge 1995)²¹ would likely have encountered the motif probably in Greek (or just possibly in Syriac)

¹⁹ The idea that the pillar of salt is ensouled is implicit in the view that it/she remains alive, as expressed by Irenaeus and in the *Versus de Sodoma* (see n. 7 above). Neither states that she will remain so until the Day of Judgment, though one could extrapolate that from them (I am not aware of any evidence that either text was known in Anglo-Saxon England). The idea of the ensouled pillar resurfaced in the early Modern period, perhaps by way of these two early Christian texts. White (1897: 2.234) summarizes the fascination that some (unspecified) theologians had with the question of "whether the soul of Lot's wife did really remain in the statue." Unfortunately, White's documentation of this "great question" is limited to the "brief statement of the main arguments for and against the idea that the soul of Lot's wife remained within the salt statue" in the seventeenth-century *Commentaria in Pentateuchum Mosis* by Cornelius à Lapide (1697: 185), who, equally unfortunately, does not specify his sources. When White states that Irenaeus "gave his approval to the belief that the soul of Lot's wife still lingered in the statue, giving it a sort of organic life" (227) he is referring to the passage quoted above. The question was certainly familiar to Calvin, who referred to the idea of the ensouled pillar only to refute it (McGrath and Packer 2001: 185).

²⁰ Bischoff and Lapidge (1996: 530) suggest that this phrase may refer to Syriac exegetes, but "in any case not Greek."

²¹ A few of the glosses indicate some knowledge of Syriac (Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 205, 233–40, 247, 442–3, 519, 521), though Brock considers it "not at all likely that Theodore will have read Syriac" (1995b: 433); see more generally Brock 1995a.

Christian writings, or as the result of personal interaction with Greek or Syriac scholars, and subsequently brought that knowledge with him to Canterbury along with other rare Eastern patristic (and Jewish) lore.²²

As Lapidge and Bischoff have noted, Theodore's biblical glosses are "wholly Antiochene in orientation" (Lapidge 1995: 5), dealing primarily with literal questions raised by the biblical text (Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 245–9).²³ The *Genesis A* poet's use of a Canterbury gloss is of a piece with the impression conveyed by the poem as a whole, which consistently avoids extra-literal exegesis (see Wright 2012). *Genesis A* evinces a special interest in questions raised by marvelous things and events, which the poet is at pains to justify as literally credible: how Adam could have had a rib extracted without suffering (God put him into an anaesthetic sleep, ll. 176–83a); how Noah and his sons could have built so gigantic a craft as the ark (they had "many years" to complete the job, l. 1320a); and how the ark could have survived such punishing waters (it was caulked with a special waterproofing type of pitch, ll. 1324b–6). The extraordinary death and transfiguration of Lot's wife is another such marvel, but because it is the result of the direct action of God (*þæt is wundra sum, / þāra ðe geworhte wuldres aldor*, ll. 2574b–75), it does not need to be rationalized.²⁴

The poet's eschatological comment about Lot's wife does, however, have a significant theological implication: it affirms that, however marvelous and unnatural her death, Lot's wife will nonetheless be resurrected and judged along with the rest of humanity. Earlier the poet had described another person, Enoch, who did not die as people normally do (*swā hēr men dōþ*, ll. 1205b–6), an exception highlighted by being embedded within a long catalogue of Old Testament patriarchs who did die. But while Enoch's case also fascinates the poet – the description of his non-death is twice as long as the description of the deaths

²² The *Laterculus Malalianus*, which Jane Stevenson has convincingly attributed to Theodore, likewise draws on Jewish exegetical method and learning (Stevenson 1995: 41, 168, 205–6, 207).

²³ Patristic scholars no longer accept an unqualified dichotomy between "Antiochene" and "Alexandrian" schools of exegesis, yet historical interpretation (though often in the service of *theoria* or spiritual understanding) was predominant in the exegesis of most of the Greek fathers on whom Theodore of Canterbury drew, and Theodore's own exegesis rarely departs from literal and historical interpretations. The contrast with Bede's frequent recourse to extra-literal interpretations (including but not restricted to the allegorical level) is striking, whether or not we label their approaches "Antiochene" and "Alexandrian."

²⁴ The poet's willingness to accept the marvelous in acts of God without such rationalizations suggests that, even if it had been available to him, he would not have availed himself of the rationalization offered by the Irish author of the *De mirabilibus sanctae scripturae*, who explained that, since salt is naturally present in the human body, God merely caused its extension throughout the body of Lot's wife (1.2; *PL* 35: 2160); this explanation is repeated in the Hiberno-Latin "Reference Bible," MacGinty 2002: 137.

of any of the eleven deceased patriarchs – it is different not simply because, unlike Lot's wife, Enoch "wæs þeoden hold" (l. 1204b), but also because he was taken up living with soul and body still together (ll. 1203b–13).²⁵

Apparent exceptions to Paul's "law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2) and his testimony that "death reigned from Adam unto Moses" (Rom. 5:14) seem to have been a recurrent topic in Theodore's biblical seminars. Bischoff and Lapidge state that it is not clear why the legend of the Seven Sleepers "should have been linked to the mention of Lot's wife," but the rationale is that both involve cases of persons who were miraculously suspended in an unnatural form of "death" involving uncertainty about the location of their souls (1994: 530). The Sleepers were also in a kind of stasis, in their case a sleep that resembled death, yet a condition which they (when revived) described as an unconscious form of living, like being in the mother's womb. During that time they did not know where their souls had been committed by God.²⁶ The Canterbury glosses also take up the case of Enoch. Although Genesis 5:24 does not specify where God "took" Enoch, only that he "walked with God," Ecclesiasticus 44:16 in the Vulgate says that he was "translated to Paradise" (for post-biblical traditions about Enoch's translation see Alexander 1998). As Bischoff and Lapidge (1994: 448) note, however, the Septuagint text of Ecclesiasticus does not have this statement, and the Canterbury commentator is circumspect, offering tentative possibilities (islands, or certain mountains, Paradise perhaps being one) but stating bluntly that "men do not know where" (PentI 62, trans. Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 315, with commentary at 448; cf. 235). The *Genesis A* poet avoids saying where Enoch was taken, specifying only that it was "out of this transitory life" with the king of angels (ll. 1210–11), which might suggest Paradise or heaven but leaves the question open. Was this simply because the poet's immediate source in Genesis did not say, or might his reticence indicate knowledge of the Canterbury School teaching that the location was unknown?²⁷

²⁵ Although the poet does not mention it here, he was likely familiar with the commonplace tradition that Enoch would return in the Last Times as one of the "two witnesses" (Rev. 11:3) and be slain by Antichrist (see Berger 1976: 49–101); so Enoch too would, at length, die *swā her men dōþ*. The curious paraphrase for Enoch's body (*on þām gearwum þe his gāst onfeng / ær hine tō monnum mōdor brōhte*) suggests that this is indeed his corporeal body (destined to perish), not a spiritual body (contrary to authorities such as Epiphanius, cited by Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 449).

²⁶ "Nam ut infans est in utero matris suae non sentiens ... sic fuimus uiuentes atque iacentes et dormientes"; "Et non sensuerunt quomodo dormierunt neque ubi animas eorum deposuit deus" (Martorano 1998: 46 and 38). In the version of Gregory of Tours, we are told that God "suscepitque animas illorum" and later "iussit reverti spiritus in corpora" (Krusch 1885: 399 and 400).

²⁷ The illustrator of the Junius manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11) depicted the translation of Enoch (p. 61) using "disappearing Christ" Ascension iconography,

Other Canterbury glosses involve exceptional instances of different kinds. PentI 431 invokes two Greek fathers (Epiphanius of Cyprus and Evagrius Ponticus) as authorities for the view that Dathan and Abiron were kept alive in their bodies even after being swallowed by the earth, and insists that they “are to remain thus until the Day of Judgement” (*ac sic debent usque ad iudicium esse*; Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 376–9, with commentary at 491; see also 231). Though the immediate point is that “the Lord does not avenge himself twice,” the gloss implicitly affirms that divinely-caused exceptions to death as the separation of body and soul do not involve an exemption from general judgment. Two glosses (EvII 41 and EvII 75, Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 404–5 and 408–11, with commentary at 517 and 522) tap into a rich vein of apocryphal, rabbinic, and patristic speculation and controversy over whether Moses was alive or dead, and over the whereabouts of his body and his soul,²⁸ in addressing the “knotty question” (*questio nodosa*, EvII 41) of how Moses could appear at the Transfiguration of Christ (Mt 17:3 and Mk 9:3). The commentator – presumably Theodore – affirms that Moses “was present in the spirit” (*not* in the body) and that Jesus had “snatched the soul of Moses from hell in the same way” he had done with Lazarus.²⁹ Those who claim that his soul was somewhere else, the commentator argues, “abuse” Paul’s statement that “death reigned from Adam unto Moses” (Rom. 5:14), and inaptly cite Jude 9 (*cum Michahel archangelus cum diabolo disputans altercaretur de Mosi corpore*) as if that text said “soul” rather than “body” (EvII 75).³⁰

To my knowledge, no Canterbury School gloss (or, for that matter, Leiden family gloss) has previously been shown to be the source for an Old English poem,³¹ but we can now say that Theodore’s teaching

where the destination is clearly heaven. See Coatsworth 2003: 144–8 with pl. 5. In Anglo-Saxon texts Enoch is usually represented as being in heaven or in the earthly Paradise (see Kabir 2004: 175–82).

²⁸ On the tradition that Moses did not die but was translated to heaven, see Jeremias 1967: 854–5; Meeks 1967: 209–11; Lohfink 1971: 68–9; Loewenstamm 1976: 197–9.

²⁹ That Moses was brought up from hell (*ab inferis*) is stated by Jerome, *Commentarii in Mathaeum* (Hurst and Adriaen 1969: 148); for the view that he was resurrected in body and soul, see Berger 1976: 20, 255 n. 60, 256 n. 71; McGuckin 1986: 122–3, 204, 271, and 287.

³⁰ This gloss is difficult to interpret, but as I understand it, the opening “*Quaeritur*” in EvII 75 as well as the paraphrase of the “knotty question” in EvII 41 imply that the opinion that Moses’ soul “was held in the power of contrary spirits” is not that of the commentator (who asserts that Moses’ soul was in hell, like everyone else’s), but the opinion of those who put this question. The “contrary spirits” are those of Jude 9, which both EvII 41 and EvII 75 say was applied to this question by others (who interpreted the matter incorrectly). For the tradition of a struggle over the soul of Moses see Kushlevsky 1995.

³¹ Remley 1996: 47 states that “my own examination of the glosses of the Leiden family that have appeared in print ... suggests that there is no basis for positing a direct connection between their contents and any of the Old Testament verse of Junius 11.” Remley does, however, suggest that biblical glosses such as those of the Leiden family provide evidence for the transmission of extrabiblical knowledge “associated with specific passages from scripture in the early medieval classroom” (48), the kind of lore represented by the “unmetrical embedded gloss on the names of Noah’s wives” in *Genesis A*, ll. 1547–8. The

about Lot's wife from one of his Canterbury seminars survived, not just in Latin classroom notes, but also in an Old English poem. The discovery does not have decisive bearing on the date of *Genesis A*, since theoretically the gloss might have been available at any time from Theodore's episcopacy to the time the Junius manuscript was written. Yet there are no surviving English manuscripts of the Canterbury glosses, and only "questionable" evidence for their continuing circulation in England (Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 190–1 and n. 56; 414, 499, 520, 527). The gloss about Lot's wife does recur in the two Continental manuscripts containing Leiden glossary material, but not in any of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts that draw on Leiden family glosses (though it is of course possible that it was transmitted in English biblical glossaries now lost).³²

Other than the Bible and the liturgy,³³ only two other probable direct Latin sources for *Genesis A* have been identified, and both are also Anglo-Saxon. I have argued elsewhere (Wright 1996) that Aldhelm's *Carmen de uirginitate* was the likely source for the poet's lurid image of the twigs of sin that sprout from the blood of Abel (ll. 982b–95a). A.N. Doane has argued that the poet's use of word *fyrgebræc* (l. 2562b), referring to the crashing noise of the fire that induces Lot's wife to look back, was influenced by Bede's phrase *fragorem flammaram* in the same context in his *In principium Genesis* (ca. 722x725, see Kendall 2008: 45–53),³⁴ and two other passages from Bede's commentary cited by Doane and by B.F. Huppé also seem likely sources.³⁵ Aldhelm's poem,

PentIII glosses (ed. Vaciago 2004: 1.11, no. 41) also transmit apocryphal names of the wives of Noah and his sons, but they are not the same as those in *Genesis A*.

³² The evidence is summarized by Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 179, drawing on Pfeifer 1987. The Leiden Glossary itself preserves a collection originally made in England in Theodore's time; see also Lendinara 1999 for evidence that Canterbury School glosses were known to the Anglo-Saxon author of the *Liber monstrorum*. Leiden family glossaries were widely disseminated on the Continent as a result of the Anglo-Saxon missions to the Continent (see the list of Continental manuscripts in Lapidge 1986).

³³ The poet certainly knew some form of the Preface to the Canon of the Mass (see Michl 1947); for other possible liturgical models see Remley 1996.

³⁴ Bede, *In principium Genesis* 4.19.26 (Jones 1967: 227, l. 1204). See Doane 2013: 384, note to l. 2562b, and Doane's entry in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* (1990: Entry Ref. C.A.1.1.1.102, citing Bede as a "probable source"). A more general parallel in Claudius Marius Victor's *Alethia* is cited by Schwab 1989: 50 n. 160.

³⁵ Doane 1990 also cites a passage from Bede's commentary (3.13.10, Jones 1967: 178–9) as a "probable antecedent source" (SA2: see Entry Ref. C.A.1.1.1.077) for the poet's contrast between the fairness of the land of Sodom and the wickedness of its inhabitants, whose sins Lot refused to follow, fleeing their custom even while inhabiting their land (ll. 1931a–44; see also Doane 2013: 362). He cites another passage (1.2.5–6, Jones 1967: 42–3) as a "possible source" for the poet's rearrangement of three biblical verses in ll. 210b–17 (1990, Entry Ref. C.A.1.1.1.015.01; 2013: 302). Though not included in Doane's *Fontes* entry or edition, a very close parallel in Bede's commentary (3.14.14, Jones 1967: 187) for the poet's comment in ll. 2092b–5 about Abraham's great victory achieved with such a small force was noted by Huppé 1959: 196. The other Bedan passages cited by Doane in his *Fontes* entry are not claimed as sources but only as analogues. Schwab 1989: 48 and n. 55 very tentatively suggests that Bede's phrase *petra salis* (referring not to Lot's

though less widely read and copied than its prose twin, would likely have been available throughout the Anglo-Saxon period,³⁶ but there is almost no evidence (other than *Genesis A* itself) for the circulation of Bede's commentary on Genesis in Anglo-Saxon England until the time of Ælfric and Byrhtferth.³⁷ All three of these probable sources, then, are home-grown and quite early, and two of them seem to have had very limited circulation in England between their initial publication and the date of the Junius Manuscript. If not just a curious coincidence, the poet's use of Theodore, Aldhelm, and Bede is best explained by the assumption that he was a contemporary or near-contemporary who was drawing on the learning of his (and their) time.

The poet's access to lore emanating from the School of Canterbury suggests that his floruit was no more than a generation or two at most removed from Theodore's episcopacy. Bede (*Historica ecclesiastica* 4.2.1, Lapidge 2010: 2.170–1) tells us that some Anglo-Saxons who had studied with Theodore were still living in his own time, and in his *Questiones octo* (cap. 3, Gorman 1999: 65 = *PL* 93: 456–7; see Bischoff and Lapidge 1996: 41) Bede reports that he had heard “from certain people” of Theodore's explanation of Paul's reference to the “depth of the sea” in 2 Cor. 11:25.³⁸ This still-living tradition, however, was also a dying one, for Bede clearly regards these elderly men and their knowledge of Theodore's teachings as rarities, and Bede does not seem to have had access to any written texts containing Theodore's teachings. Moreover, for all his evident admiration for the reputation of the School of Canterbury, Bede in his own biblical commentaries does not adopt Theodore's fundamentally literal mode of exegesis, nor, apart from the one citation in the *Quaestiones octo*, does he transmit interpretations that have been traced to Canterbury School teachings.

The evidence of sources, as far as it goes, is consistent with the linguistic, metrical, and paleographical evidence for an early date for both *Genesis A* and *Beowulf*. According to Robert D. Fulk, *Beowulf's* adherence to Kaluza's law as well as its preservation of other archaic

wife, but to the “rock of salt” that Christ administers to the faithful in warning them to remember her (*In principium Genesis* 4, Jones 1967: 227–8; Kendall 2008: 306) may have influenced the poet's use of the word *sealtstān* (but she also raises the possibility that Bede's phrase may be a Latin calque on the OE word).

³⁶ For the manuscripts see Gneuss and Lapidge 2014 (nos 12, 82, 542, 584, 661). For quotations and (possible) booklist entries, consult the index to Lapidge 2006.

³⁷ Gneuss and Lapidge 2014 record none containing Bede's commentary. For the citations by Ælfric and Byrhtferth, see Lapidge 2006: 254–5 and 268; and especially the forthcoming SASLC entry on Bede by Brown and Biggs (2016). *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* cites only one earlier text (Charter S428, dating to 930; see Love 1997, Entry Ref. L.S.428.002) with Bede's commentary as “possible” source (for the phrase “totius mundi machina,” which also occurs in a letter of Boniface (*PL* 89: 714), a poem by Smaragdus (Dümmler 1881: 611), and the hymn “Iste confessor Domini sacratu” (Schaller and Könsgen 1977: 376, no. 8410).

³⁸ Bede elsewhere reports a piece of medical lore attributed to Theodore by John of Beverley (*HE* 5.3.2, Lapidge 2010: 2.336; see Bischoff and Lapidge 1994: 268).

linguistic and metrical features indicate that the poem “almost certainly was not composed after ca. 725 if Mercian in origin, or after ca. 825 if Northumbrian” (Fulk 1992: 390); but Fulk also shows that the preponderance of evidence favors Mercian origin. *Genesis A* and *Daniel* are “roughly contemporary with *Beowulf*,” and so “probably cannot be much later than ca. 725 if *Beowulf* is Mercian and of course they may be earlier than that” (1992: 392).³⁹ In the case of *Genesis A*, as Fulk demonstrates (1992: 392; see also Doane 2013: 54), several independent archaic features converge to suggest a very early date. Michael Lapidge (2000) has argued more recently that certain patterns of scribal error in the *Beowulf* manuscript must reflect an archetype earlier than 750;⁴⁰ applying Lapidge’s methodology to *Genesis A*, Doane concludes that similar types of scribal error in Junius 11 are “suggestive of the existence of a set/cursive minuscule exemplar ... from the early eighth century” or “pre-750” (2013: 39 and 40).

Calibrating the philological evidence for a *terminus ante quem* with the source evidence for a *terminus post quem*, if the *Genesis A* poet was composing during or within living memory of Theodore’s episcopacy (669x690; see Lapidge 1995), then the window for dating the poem is between 669 and ca. 750. If the poet drew on Aldhelm’s *Carmen de uirginitate*, then the window is somewhat narrower, between ca. 680 and ca. 750;⁴¹ and if he also drew on Bede’s *In principium Genesis*, the window becomes much narrower, between ca. 722x725 and ca. 750. If *Genesis A* was itself a source for *Beowulf*,⁴² and if *Beowulf* was composed before ca. 725, then the window for dating *Beowulf* narrows according to the *terminus post quem* for *Genesis A* – indeed almost to the vanishing point if the *Genesis A* poet knew Bede’s commentary. It is, however, conceivable that *Genesis A* was the source for Aldhelm or Bede (though not for Theodore, who attributes his teaching on the fate of Lot’s wife to eastern sources), or else that the parallels between them reflect (lost or unidentified) mutual common sources, or are simply independent attestations of (apparently rare) motifs that were in circulation at the time.⁴³ However we assess these relative probabilities, the motifs

³⁹ Additional lexical evidence for an early date for both poems is given by Cronan 2004 and Neidorf 2013–14; additional metrical evidence is given by Russom 2002 and Bredehoft 2014. On Kaluza’s law see further Neidorf and Pascual 2014.

⁴⁰ Clark 2009 clears the ground of some objections that had been raised (by Stanley 2002) to Lapidge’s argument.

⁴¹ The date of the *Carmen de uirginitate* is unknown, but it must be later than the prose *De uirginitate*, which was written before Aldhelm became abbot of Malmesbury, that is, before about 680; Aldhelm died in 709 or 710. See Lapidge 2007: 61–2 and n. 11 and 68–9.

⁴² See Klaeber 1910 and 1950: cx. As Andersson 1998: 144 notes, since many of the parallels between the two poems “are predicated on the Vulgate, it seems clear that the priority lies with *Genesis A*.” Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: clxxiv–xv summarize Klaeber’s views favorably, though without committing themselves. See also Wright 2012: 168 n. 160.

⁴³ I thank Thomas N. Hall, Thomas D. Hill, and Dov Weiss for their comments and suggestions on this paper.

shared by the *Genesis A* poet with these early Anglo-Saxon writers, as well as the source relation (in whatever direction) linking *Genesis A* and *Beowulf*, tend to corroborate the linguistic evidence that both poems are quite early, probably from the first half of the eighth century if not somewhat earlier.

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Metrical Alternation in *The Fortunes of Men*

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While some would consider him primarily a metrist, R.D. Fulk has more accurately been described as a philologist: his major work does not focus exclusively on meter but rather uses meter to explore other topics, such as textual editing, the dating of poetry, and dialectal features. In a recent interview, Fulk summed up the philological approach as “the study of the extralinguistic contexts of linguistic data, or the relation between contexts and data” (Fulk 2014: 366). This paper employs that methodology by using metrical data from two sample texts, *Beowulf* and *Maxims II*, to provide a stylistic analysis and literary interpretation of *The Fortunes of Men*. Specifically, I examine metrical and discursive shifts in the poem to argue that the poet wrote a clear and traditional wisdom poem while punctuating it with narrative vignettes that add a greater emotional weight than is to be found in most gnomic poetry.

In the study of Old English poetics, scholars tend to look at the meter of the tradition, or sometimes a given poem, as a whole unit. With the exception of lines that have words stressed in an unusual position to provide emphasis,¹ individual lines or sections are rarely isolated to demonstrate the importance of the metrical patterning. The lack of attention is generally justifiable: Old English poets mix different verse types as a rule, actively avoiding excess repetition. The constant variety makes it difficult to say that a given type-D pattern in the midst of other types holds any significance; the poet might be trying to add weightiness to a statement by choosing a verse that contains secondary stress, or he might just not have used one for a while and thought it was time.

While stylistic import may be difficult to identify at the level of the verse, some broader compositional styles can be identified: Thomas Cable (1991) and Thomas Bredehoft (2005) have discussed the metrical differences of early versus late poetry and I (2014, forthcoming)

¹ See, for example, *Judith* lines 90b–2a: the stress on the possessive adjectives *minre* and *þinre* emphasizes the contrast between the two: *geunne mē minre gesynta* (hA1: xxxxPxxPx) / *þearlmod þeoden gumena*. (HA1: PSPxpxx) | *Nahte ic þinre næfre* (hA1: xxxPxPx) / *miltse þon māran þearfe* (HA1: PxxPxPx) “Grant me my deliverance, stern Lord of men. I never had greater need of your mercy” (*Judith* 90b–2a).

have discussed some unique metrical qualities in gnomic poetry. Such scholarship that looks at variant stylistic choices within the tradition at large reveals a degree of flexibility that may have been available to poets. This flexibility can be limited because Old English poets typically maintain a single stylistic norm throughout each poem. In *The Fortunes of Men*, however, the poet changes his metrical patterning as he changes his discursive strategies. This patterning takes the form of the shape or length of the verse as well as the distribution of verse types. Unlike a single verse, which could signify almost anything, the extended shifts in metrical style are distinctive and can therefore be analyzed.

These shifts may in fact illustrate the motivation for the poem, or at least its emotional core. Fulk and Cain remark that “[o]ne cannot help feeling that the pathos of the parents’ sad misfortunes was the inspiration for the poem” (2013: 154). This pathos is developed within a tight overarching structure with clearly defined sections that help the poet frame his overall point. The present essay analyzes the metrical shifts within the larger context of the structured sections to show how the poet uses metrical alternation to infuse the poem with emotional undertones that are uncommon in wisdom poetry. The repeated gnomic diction and metrical patterning create the aphoristic backbone of the poem onto which other material is attached. In the midst of this gnomic diction, the poet inserts narrative sections, marking them with distinctive metrical patterns that resemble the style of a narrative poem such as *Beowulf*. These narrative moments allow the poet to infuse the text with detail and emotion, thereby developing the pathos introduced early on and asking his audience to feel the emotions associated with each individual fate.

The metrical alternation occurs mainly because of shifts between two loosely defined genres: gnomic and narrative. Genre is a difficult subject in the context of Old English poetry. As Paul Szarmach (1993: 44) has said, “any attempt to pursue genre criticism in Old English poetry is really an invitation to climb a slippery slope” (see also Shippey 1972, Greenfield 1972, and Fulk and Cain 2013). Old English scholars are particularly hesitant to assign genres to poems for two reasons: first, many of the genres assigned in the past are modern labels that have been applied retrospectively, and, second, many Old English poems seem to mix genre categories. Nevertheless, Paul Battles argues that “[a] workable theory of intrinsic Old English poetic genres would be immensely helpful” because understanding the framework of the texts would “afford insights into many questions of vital interest to literary critics” (2014: 3–4). He contends that Old English uses three main genres, epic, elegy, and wisdom poetry,² and he argues that they can be

² Battles acknowledges that using these terms could be criticized as anachronistic, but he prefers to use them rather than further proliferate terms.

recognized from several basic ideas that often appear at the start of a poem. Epics tend to focus on heroes who protect the nations, and the poet establishes a connection with his audience (7–9). Elegies tend to be non-specific, with a speaker who maintains distance from the audience by focusing on personal feelings of sorrow and anxiety (11–13). Wisdom poetry opens with a speaker who is somewhere between the other two: he is an individual, but rather than sharing his own feelings, he disseminates his wisdom as a special member of the wise group (14–16).

Susan Deskis (2005: 327) similarly argues that wisdom poetry is a particular kind of discourse that is distinct from narrative, and she agrees with Battles that a text with one major discourse type can contain other types within it. To illustrate these discourse types, as well as to trace objectively how they are mixed, she uses two concrete definitions. She defines a gnome as a statement that can be separated from any clause before or after it and that describes a general rather than specific situation (327–8).³ In contrast, she defines a narrative passage as one containing “at least two independent clauses temporally arranged so that altering their order would change the original semantic interpretation of the sequence” (329–30).⁴ Although these definitions can be limiting because of their specificity, they can be used to show some definitive differences between the two text types, which in turn entail several syntactic and lexical distinctions.

Due to the distinctive syntax and lexicon, the way the clauses fit into the verse and the resulting metrical patterns differ between these two modes of discourse as well. The metrical differences are not nearly as concrete as the distinctions Deskis makes, so they cannot be used objectively to separate the two modes of discourse. They differ enough, though, that the audience would be able to recognize the different modes and identify a poem accordingly by its sound. Shifts in the metrical patterning could therefore intimate shifts in the genre that the audience would be alert to, even if the shift were not complete.

Examples from *Beowulf* and *Maxims II* can illustrate the typical patterning of these two genres, and a comparison between the poems can

³ There is no universally agreed upon definition of a gnomic statement, but Deskis’s definition accords with the general observations of most scholars. Paul Cavill (1999) defines gnomes and maxims as “a linkage of a thing and a characteristic” and “a sententious generalization,” respectively (11), and argues that the main verb must be in the present tense, the subject cannot be a specific individual, and the statement cannot reference a specific situation (51). Elaine Tuttle Hansen (1988) and Carolyne Larrington (1993) do not provide a concise definition but agree that gnomes are non-specific and frequently involve present-tense verbs and generalizing adverbs.

⁴ To formulate these definitions, Deskis refers to Virtanen 1992 and Labov 1972.

show why the meter differs as it does. Narrative patterning includes a variety of verse types, relatively short verses, and complex syntactic structures, as the example from *Beowulf* illustrates:

Gewiton him þā fēran; flota stille bād,
 A3: xxxxxPx D4: pxPxS
 seomode on sǣle sīdfæþmed scip,
 A1: pxxxPx E: PSxP
 on ancre fæst; eoforlic scionon
 B1: xPxP A2k: pxSp_x
 ofer hlēorber[g]an gehroden golde,
 C1: xxPPx C2: xpxPx
 fāh ond fyrheard; ferhwearde hēold
 A2b: PxPS E: PSxP
 gūþmōd grīmmōn. (*Beo* 301-306a)
 A2l: PSPx

They set out traveling then; the vessel remained still, a wide-girthed ship tied to a rope, fastened to an anchor; boar-images gleamed, covered with gold, over cheek-guards, patterned and fire-hardened; the warlike, helmeted man accorded them safe conduct.⁵

In this passage, the poet employs a wide range of verse types, using not only all five types but also various subtypes. He also keeps the verses relatively short; eight of the eleven verses have the minimal four syllables, and two more have only five syllables.⁶ The metrical-syntactic features are relatively complex, for the poet makes frequent use of different levels of variation. After the first complete clause in the first verse, the poet writes another short clause, *flota stille bād*, then puts the clause *seomode on sǣle sīdfæþmed scip on ancre fæst* in variation with that. Within that clause in variation, the prepositional phrase *on ancre fæst* also stands in variation with *on sǣle*. In the following clause, the poet does not use variation, but instead makes use of the similar process that Brodeur (1969: 41–2) calls enumeration, adding parallel detail to his description of the helmet. Together, the different metrical features

⁵ For the metrical analysis, I have analyzed and labeled the verses as one of the five types developed by Eduard Sievers (1893), but the notation system is that developed by Rand Hutcheson, where P stands for primary stress on a long syllable, S stands for a half stress on a long syllable, p and s stand for short syllables, and x stands for an unstressed syllable. Quotations from *Beowulf* come from Fulk, Bjork, and Niles (2008). All other references to Old English poems refer to Krapp and Dobbie (1931–53) (*ASPR*). The *ASPR* does not include marks of vowel length in the text, but because they are useful for metrical studies, I have added them here. Translations from Fulk (2010) and Bjork (2014).

⁶ An incidence of 73% is high for four-syllable verses in *Beowulf*; on average, the poet uses four-syllable verses about half of the time. This number does not hold true for narrative verses across the poetic corpus because verse-length can vary for different reasons; late poetry, for example, tends to have longer verses. Most conservative and even moderately conservative poems, however, are similar in this regard.

create a passage that is both intricate and varied, giving the listener an assortment of rhythms and myriad details to follow.

A typical gnomic passage is structured differently. Here, longer verses with multiple unstressed words and repeated patterns of both metrical types and syntactic structures become standard:

Ellen sceal on eorle, ecg sceal wið hellme
 A1: PxxxPx A1: PxxPx
 hilde gebīdan. Hafuc sceal on glōfe
 A1: PxxPx A1: pxxxPx
 wilde gewunian, wulf sceal on bearowe,
 A1: Pxxpxx A1: Pxxpxx
 earm ānhaga, efor sceal on holte,
 D2: PPsx A1: pxxxPx
 tōðmāgenes trum. (MaxII 16–20a)
 E: PsxxP

Courage must be in a man, blade against helmet
 must experience battle. The hawk must stand
 wild on the glove, the wolf must be in the woods,
 a wretched lone dweller; the boar must be in the forest,
 secure in the strength of its tusks.

This passage is clearly formed by repeated formulaic statements, as is typical of gnomic verse. The major formulaic system is NOUN+*sceal*+PREP+NOUN.⁷ After the first single verse, each wise statement comes in two parts: the formula itself, which is always in the off-verse, followed by an extra qualification in the form of a verb phrase, variation, or further description. The passage is therefore syntactically repetitive; each clause starts with the same, verse-specific formulation; and variation is limited to a single noun phrase in a prescribed position. This pattern has multiple additional effects on the meter. It makes the passage metrically repetitive because each formula is realized as a type-A verse, and the accompanying verse can be as well; overall, this creates a noticeable shift in verse types throughout the poem, as Table 17.1 illustrates:

The table shows that verse distribution is fairly regular, with the narrative poem *Beowulf* matching up closely to the corpus as a whole. The only major difference is that *Beowulf* tends to employ more type-E

⁷ A formulaic system can be defined as “a group of half-lines, usually loosely related metrically and semantically, which are related in form by the identical relative placement of two elements, one a variable word or element of a compound usually supplying the alliteration, and the other a constant word or element of a compound, with approximately the same distribution of non-stressed elements” (Fry 1967: 203). A formula would therefore be the realization of one of these systems within a poem. The structure of the *Maxims II* system is unusual because the unstressed rather than the stressed material remains stable, but this type of system is normal for gnomic poetry.

Table 17.1: Distribution of normal verse types⁸

	A	B	C	D	E	Irregular
<i>Beowulf</i>	45.6%	15.2%	18.3%	10.6%	8.8%	1.5%
Sample of OE Corpus ⁹	45.6%	19.2%	18.7%	10.9%	5.6%	0
<i>Maxims II</i>	60.5%	7.9%	9.6%	16.7%	5.3%	0%
<i>The Fortunes of Men</i>	45.8%	17.2%	19.3%	12.0%	4.7%	1.6%

verses while the entire corpus is more likely to include a large number of type-B verses. *Maxims II*, however, presents a different picture with a larger percentage of type-A verses, the type most frequently formed by the dominant formulaic systems. In contrast, types B and C are not used as frequently, though type D, which can easily substitute for type A in some of these formulaic statements, is commoner. The data therefore confirm that the language has a clear effect on the verse distribution.

Other areas of meter are affected as well. The verses in *Maxims II* are slightly longer because the formulaic system creates a drop of at least two syllables with two separate words, since the stable *sceal*+PREP is always unstressed and always two syllables long. A further syllable can be added, as in the first verse, when the first noun is a disyllable with a long root syllable. Yet even this feature leads to a degree of repetition because while the length of the verses is longer on average than in narrative poems, they are longer by about the same amount each time. These passages therefore create a strong rhythmic feeling that could reinforce the nature of the poem as a catalogue, allowing the audience to pick out each individual gnome more easily as well as to hear the connection between them and recognize the list as a whole. Such features are not necessary for the audience to recognize a wisdom poem, but they would clue the audience in more quickly and perhaps be considered appropriate for the context.

These metrical features follow naturally from the typical structure and diction of gnomic statements. The verbs used most often in gnomic statements are *bif* and *sceal*, which are normally unstressed, especially if they appear early in the clause. Though not illustrated in the example above, an unstressed *sum* or *mon* as an impersonal subject can also characterize gnomic diction. With the addition of features such as a prepositional phrase, this diction creates many unstressed syllables. Furthermore, the continual use of the same formulaic phraseology

⁸ I did not include hypermetric verses in this table because they are not distributed normally across the poem and they do not appear in all poems, so including them would unevenly affect the percentages of the other verse types.

⁹ This sample was taken from Hutcheson (1995: 287–95); note that he does not consider any verses irregular.

necessitates repetitive syntax, which, in turn, leads to repetition of verse types, the end result of which is a strong rhythmic pattern.

It might seem logical, then, that any sort of gnomic statement or passage would contain the same metrical features, but this is not in fact the case. *Beowulf* has many gnomic passages but does not typically replicate gnomic patterning. While the poem does have a few statements such as *Gæð ā wyrd swā hīo scel* (B2: xxPxxP) 'things always go as they must' (*Beo* 455b), in which a single gnomic statement forms a single verse and contains long unstressed positions, more typically, a gnomic passage in *Beowulf* is as follows:

Swā sceal ge(ong) guma gōde gewyrcean,
 C3: xxPpx A1: PxxPx
 fromum feohgiftum on fæder (bea)rme,
 D1: pxPSx C2: xpxPx
 þæt hine on ylde eft gewunigen
 A3: xxxxPx A1: Pxpxx
 wilgesīpas, þonne wīg cume,
 A1: PxPx C3: xxPpx
 lēode gelæsten; lofdædum sceal
 A1: PxxPx E: PSxP
 in mægpa gehwære man geþéon. (*Beo* 20–5)
 A1: xPxxPx A1: PxPx

So ought a young man to ensure by his liberality, by ready largesse, while in his father's care, that close companions will in turn stand by him in his later years, his men be true when war comes; from praiseworthy deeds comes success in every nation.

This passage contains some of the hallmarks of a gnomic statement: it is in the present tense, it uses generalizing terms such as the verb *sceal* and the pronoun *gehwære*, and it describes a non-specific situation. Metrically, though, this passage has more in common with the previous *Beowulf* passage than it does with the passage from *Maxims II*. Most clearly, it has a good deal of metrical variety in terms of the verse types: although type A dominates here, the passage nevertheless contains four of the verse types with some different subtypes. In terms of verse length, over half the lines are the minimal four syllables and the rest are relatively short. The passage also contains two instances of variation: the noun phrase *fromum feohgiftum* for *gōde* and the clause *lēode gelæsten* for *hine on ylde eft gewunigen wilgesīpas*. These features make for a more complex, varied sound and syntax.

The meter seems to differ as it does because of the poets' priorities and what they choose to emphasize. In the passage from *Maxims II*, the poet puts each gnome in one or two verses. This choice has a few key effects. First, it makes each gnome more memorable. Most formulaic systems are formed over one, perhaps two, verses, presumably

because they would not be useful as a mnemonic tool if they were much longer.¹⁰ Proverbs are likewise short and pithy so that they are easy to remember. A poetic gnome would logically combine these features for a memorable statement. Secondly, when the gnome is a distinct unit, it can stand out more: it has a degree of finality that allows the audience to anticipate where it ends and recognize it for what it is. The repetition of gnomic statements reinforces both of these features and emphasizes the overall gnomic nature of the poem. This repetition also allows for the elliptical quality that can characterize gnomes. In the *Maxims II* passage, the audience often has to supply a verb to go with the modal *sceal*; even when a verb is there, as with the case of *wilde gewunian* or *hilde gebīdan*, the infinitive could be omitted without obscuring the sense. This is because the general idea of explaining the place of things has been established, so the audience can fill in the blanks that point the gnome in that direction. Thus, the lexical content influences the structure, the structure in turn helps with the interpretation of the passage, and the whole governing principle of the composition clearly emphasizes the gnomic intent of the poem.

In contrast, while the *Beowulf* poet does include some gnomic elements, the syntax and metrical structure of the gnomic section remains similar to that of the narrative moments. The poet wanders his way through the wise statement, taking as many verses as required and adding details through features such as variation. In this structure, elliptical statements such as the ones in *Maxims II* are not possible; taking the infinitive phrase *gode gewyrcean* out of the passage would ruin the sense. Instead, the full statement must be carefully explained, as any narrative statement would. In this way, the focus of the poem remains on the intricate poetics more than the gnomic nature of the statement.

Together, then, these two poems illustrate the metrical patterning of two major discourse strategies, and they also show that a poet can maintain a single metrical style throughout in spite of any different discourse strategies employed within the larger genre of the poem. Yet unlike *Beowulf*, *The Fortunes of Men* does not adhere to one type of metrical patterning but instead switches between the types illustrated above in order to mark the discursive changes. *The Fortunes of Men* is one of two poems, according to Deskis (2005), that contains the inverse discourse strategy of *Beowulf* and brings narrative into a wisdom poem (the other is *Maxims I*). Deskis shows how in one passage, the much-debated passage about death by falling out of a tree in lines 21–6, the poet uses narrative syntax, and she argues that he uses near-narrative in many others. At these moments, the *Fortunes of Men* poet shifts the meter to match the discursive mode, using metrical

¹⁰ For discussions of the length requirements of formulaic systems, see for example Fry 1967: 203 and Niles 1983: 126.

alternation within the larger structure to highlight the change. In this way, the gnomic elements of the poem are clear, but the poet can also explore some narrative moments in detail.

Richard H. Dammers (1976: 462) divides the poem into four sections: “man’s birth into the world without any awareness of the future, the evil fortunes suffered by men, the good fortunes enjoyed by men, and a call for faith in and acceptance of the Savior, the ruler of Fate.” To this, I would add one more, a transition section in the middle, so that the poem is set up as follows: introduction (lines 1–12), list of evil fortunes (lines 12–57), transitional section (64–72), list of good fortunes (lines 77–92), conclusion (lines 93–8). Within each section, the poet marks the important changes in discourse strategies with metrical alternation, thereby highlighting both the shifts and the connections that he makes.

The poem opens with an explanation of God’s power over all of the fates:

Ful oft þæt gegongeð, mid godes meahtum,
A3: xxxxPx C2: xpxPx
þætte wer ond wif in woruld cennað
B1: xxPxP C2: xpxPx
bearn mid gebyrdum ond mid blēom gyrwað,
A1: PxxPx C1: xxPPx
tennaþ ond tætaþ, oþþæt sēo tīd cymeð,
A1: PxxPx C3: xxxPpx
gegæð gēarrīmum, þæt þā geongan leomu,
aD1: xPPSx B1: xxPxxpx
liffæstan leoþu, geloden weorþað.
E: PSxpx C2: xpxPx
Fergað swā ond fēþað fæder ond mōdor,
A1: PxxxPx A1: pxxPx
giefað ond gierwaþ. God āna wāt
A1: pxxPx D4: PPxS
hwæt him weaxendum winter bringað! (*Fort* 1–9)
C1: xxPPx A1: PxPx

Very often it happens through God’s might
that a man and a woman bring children
into the world through birth and adorn them with colors,
coax them and cheer them until the time comes,
happens through a number of years, that the young limbs,
the members endowed with life, become grown.
Thus father and mother carry them along and walk with
them, give to them and dress them. God alone knows
what winters will bring them as they are growing up.

At this point, the poet hints at the gnomic quality that will eventually dominate his poem but does not use the type of clear gnomic language

that opens either of the *Maxims* poems. He uses generalizing speech by speaking of a non-specific *wer* and *wīf* and by using the present tense. He also includes the verse *God āna wāt*, which is a formulaic statement that appears in other poems to mark the inevitability of men's fate.¹¹ Other than that, though, the section has a more narrative feel to it: almost half of the lines possess no more than the minimum of four syllables; the poet includes two instances of variation, *gegæð gēarrīnum* for *cymeð* and *liffæstan leoðu* for *pā geongan leomu*; and the verse types vary quite a bit, so much so that verse types in the entire poem match narrative distribution, as Table 17.1 above shows. Although not technically narrative according to Deskis's definition,¹² the poet brings some narrative qualities into these first nine lines. The metrical patterning therefore creates an opening that sounds more like storytelling than didacticism.

From here, the poet turns to his first catalogue, the catalogue of negative fates. He does not, however, start right in. Instead, he transitions slowly into the clear list that he will ultimately use. The next five lines start the transition because they provide a typical example of the type of gnome that makes up the poem as a whole but do not include verbatim the gnomic diction that will become characteristic of the poem:

Sumum þæt gegongeð on geoguðfēore
A3: xxxxPx C2: xpxPx
þæt sē endestæf earfeðmæcgum
B1: xxPxP A1: PxPx
wēalīc weorpeð. Sceal hine wulf etan,
A1: PxPx C3: xxxPpx
hār hæðstapa; hinsīþ þonne
D2: PPsx A2l: PSPx
mōdor bimurneð. Ne bið swylc monnes geweald! (*Fort* 10–14)
A1: PxxPx B2: xxxPxxP

For some sufferers it happens that the end
woefully occurs during youth.
The wolf, the hoary heath stalker,
will devour him; his mother will then mourn
his departure. Such is not under human control.

In this passage, the poet uses *sumum* and *sceal* but not yet in the same sentence; the poet is moving toward gnomic diction without yet embracing it entirely. The section ends, though, with a very clear gnomic statement:

¹¹ See, for example, *Maldon* 94b, *The Phoenix* 355b, and *Christ and Satan* 32b, or the alternate versions *Drihten āna wāt* in *Maxims II* 62b and *Meotude āna wāt* in *Maxims I* 29b and *Maxims II* 57b. For an extended analysis of this formula, see Cavill 1999: 52–7.

¹² Deskis calls this passage near narrative, showing that it shares commonalities with narrative but that it avoids the specific definition she uses because the poet “uses the temporally generalizing *oft*” and “suppresses narrative by placing its events in subordinate, rather than independent, clauses” (2005: 340–1).

ne bið swylc monnes gewæld. Not only is this a common gnomic sentiment, but the sound could also reinforce the gnomic content because it takes on some of the lexical and metrical characteristics of gnomic poetry. First, it uses the consuetudinal *bið* for the verb as well as the general *monnes*. Second, it extends much longer than any of the verses the poet has composed thus far, with a three-syllable opening drop and total of seven syllables in all. The verse therefore stands out due to its content, length, and form, and it marks a shift toward the express purpose of sharing wisdom.

Following this passage is the one hypermetric section of the poem:

Sumne sceal hungor āhīpan, sumne sceal hrēoh fordrīfan,
hA1: xxxPxPx hA1: xxxPxPx
sumne sceal gār āgētan, sumne gūð ābrēotan. (*Fort* 15–16)
hA1: xxxPxPx hA1: xxPxPx

Hunger will destroy one; rough weather will drive one off;
a spear will pour one's blood out; battle will destroy one.

This is the first time that the poet composes with a formulaic system that is repeated in multiple subsequent verses, and it therefore serves to solidify the connection to gnomic diction that the poet had begun to establish. The system begins with *sumne sceal*, using generalizing vocabulary and establishing the collocation that will dominate the rest of the poem. The concise gnomic statements, especially when they consist of a single verse, emphasize the importance of a single piece of wisdom. They also pull the ideas of the introductory section together because by placing all these new fates one after the other, the poet brings the focus of the poem from the broad point where he started – that God controls the fates of men's lives – to the more specific point that will be the focus for most of the poem – the large variety of fates that are possible. The concise list that juxtaposes a large number of fates in a short space illustrates this idea better than any explanation could, emphasizing the repetitive nature of the types of fates men face together with the variety of realizations those fates can take. Hence, the theme that many fates can come to man is illustrated by moving efficiently from one fate to the next within the space of four verses. It serves as a fitting summation of the first fourteen lines – which give the larger picture of God's controlling might on the situation in a more narrative form – and helps to transition into the actual dissemination of wisdom. The hypermetric composition, with its long lines that are often associated with wisdom poetry, creates an ideal structure for this transition.

After these four verses, the theme of the poem is solidly established and the poet turns to the more expansive list of fates. He builds up to this idea slowly in lines 17–20, using two instances of *sum*, one of which uses the *sum sceal* collocation, and giving two short explanations

of fates that involve infirmity. Then at line 21 he begins the pattern that defines the poem as a whole:

Sum sceal on holte of hēan bēame
 A3: xxxPx C1: xPPx
 fīperlēas feallan; bið on flihte seþēah,
 A1: pxxPx B2: xxPxxP
 lāceð on lyfte, oþþæt lengre ne bið
 A1: PxxPx B2: xxPxxP
 westem wudubēames. Þonne hē on wyrtruman
 D*1: PxpSx C3: xxxxPpx
 sīgeð sworcenferð, sāwle birēafod,
 D*4: PxPxS A1: PxxPx
 fealleþ on foldan, feorð biþ on sīþe. (*Fort* 21–6)
 A1: PxxPx A1: PxxPx

One will fall from a high tree in the forest,
 featherless: that one is flying anyway,
 playing in the air, until no longer
 a fruit hanging from the tree. Then to the foot of it,
 dark minded, bereft of soul, he plummets,
 falls to the earth; the spirit journeys on.

This defining pattern has two parts. First is the opening gnomic statement. It starts with a type-A3 verse in the form of *sum sceal* + *on* + NP, followed by a short statement of what a certain one shall do. This is a quintessential gnomic formulaic system, defined by a relatively long unstressed position containing typical gnomic diction, which will be repeated throughout the rest of the poem. Although this exact formula does not appear with any frequency in other poems, it is clearly related to other systems, such as the one that appears throughout *The Gifts of Men* starting with *sum biþ*, one that occurs in the middle of *Christ II* (668b–80b) that starts with *sum mæg*, or one in *The Wanderer* (80b–4) that uses *sumne* as a direct object in a list with multiple verbs. A similar pattern even appears in the Old Saxon *Heliand* (1222b–37a), showing that the formula is an old one that is shared in the larger Germanic tradition. This opening therefore marks the saying to come as a wise statement that further illuminates the central idea of the poem.

After the initial gnomic statement, the poet turns to more narrative features with an explanation of the initial gnome. This passage includes variation of *lāceð on lyfte* for *bið on flihte* and *fealleþ on foldan* for *Þonne hē on wyrtruman sīgeð sworcenferð*. Like the variation in *Beowulf*, these phrases are complex in that they are not simply noun phrases, but instead verb phrases and clauses, and they do not always appear in consecutive verses. The metrical patterning is also more similar to *Beowulf* in that the passage includes four out of the five verse types, with multiple sub-types, and the verses, which range in length, are

mostly relatively short. Although this passage does not have quite the diversity and succinctness of the narrative *Beowulf* passage quoted above, it shares many of the same features. In this way, the poet is able to explain his ideas completely, with smooth and complex metrical patterning that fully explores the situation. At the same time, the initial gnome that defines the passage keeps the poem's focus on its wisdom core by prefacing each larger concept with a marked gnomic opening.

The poet follows this pattern for five more passages. These passages range in length from two to nine lines after the initial introduction. A few vary the opening structure, but even in these cases, the verses still open with an extended drop starting with a form of *sum* and each piece of the formulaic system is ultimately there. All the passages therefore function in the same way as the initial one. At the sixth fate, the tone of the poem starts to shift. Dammers (1976: 446) describes this fate as a "six-line transition sentence which smoothly develops the topic of good fortune out of the earlier subject." This passage proceeds naturally from the previous ones because it opens with the same formula, but here the poet refers to the possibility of bypassing the evil fates and ending life happily, shifting the tone into something more hopeful. As he does so, the poet brings God back into the poem, showing that the evil fortunes can only be avoided *mid godes mealtum* 'with God's might' (58b). With this new tone established, the poet then moves into the transitional middle section of the poem.

At this point, the poet makes a drastic metrical shift, signaling a change in topic. The shift begins with the verse that introduces the new topic: *swā missenlice* (aA1: xPxPx) "thus variously" (Fort 64). The verse distinguishes this section from the ones surrounding it because it is the first time since the beginning of the poem that the poet moves to a new idea without marking the shift by a *sum sceal* formula with a long opening drop. It also shifts the audience's focus from each specific fate back to the larger picture that was presented in the introductory section: the myriad fates that are possible and how God is in control of all of them.

After the first clause, which explains that God deals out the various fates throughout the world, the poet changes to a more consistently gnomic style than he uses previously. Starting at 67a, he completes his sentence with six more fates, each framed as its own gnome of one or two verses:

sumum eadwelan,	sumum earfeþa dæl,
C3: xxPpx	B2: xxPxxP
sumum geogoþe glæd,	sumum gūþe blæd,
B1: xxpxxP	B1: xxPxP
gewealdenne wīgplegan,	sumum wyrp oþþe scyte,
irregular: xPSxPsx	B2: xxPxxpx

torhtlicne tiir, sumum tæfle cræft,
E: PSxP B1: xxPxP
blēobordes gebregd. (Fort 67–71a)
E: PSxxP

[God deals out] to one, wealth; to one, a share of miseries;
to one, gladness in youth; to one, glory in war,
controlled battle play; to one, throwing or shooting,
radiant fame; to one, skill at tables,
quick movement on the colored board.

In this passage, each gnome starts with *sumum* in an unstressed position – usually in a type-B verse, but once a type C – and states a fate that God might bestow. Here, the formulaic system is used again and again to form adjacent or nearly adjacent verses, much as formulaic systems do in the two *Maxims* poems. Since these verses are formed exclusively by type-B and type-C verses, the list creates a section in which many of the verses open with a drop and which takes on a rhythmic repetition similar to that in *Maxims II*. The shift therefore draws the listeners' attention and serves to reinforce the poem's place in the larger gnomic tradition.

Once the connection is established, the poet returns to his previous pattern, stating a fate that starts with *sum sceal* in a type-A3 verse that is illustrated by a short vignette. All the same characteristics of the earlier passages are there: the gnomic opening, the narrative style in the following verses that includes a variety of verse types, and intricate use of variation. The only difference is that these new fates are now positive instead of negative.

After these last fates, the poet concludes his poem with a final section that starts with *swā wrætlice* "thus splendidly" (Fort 93a) to mirror the *swā missenlice* that he used to return to the idea of God in the interlude, once again marking the shift to the larger topic. Here as well, the poet makes God the subject, saying that *weoroda nergend* "the savior of hosts" (Fort 93b) dealt out *monna cræftas* 'skills of people' (Fort 94b). The poem thus ends where it began, focused on the fates in general and explaining God's control over them all. The meter is interesting in this concluding section. The passage generally takes on the metrical and syntactic characteristics associated with narrative because it uses four out of the five verse types and shifts briefly out of the gnomic present and into the past tense. The last two lines, though, return to a more gnomic quality because, as Dammers (1976, 463–4) points out, they are unusually long for this poem, thereby mirroring the hypermetric end of some wisdom poems, as well as poems such as *The Wanderer* that are concerned with sharing wisdom. This also allows for a short cadence to develop in these last two lines, since each consists of a verse with a long opening drop followed by a type-A verse. The last sentence therefore

reinforces the gnomic nature of the poem. At the same time, it also gives the audience one more piece of wisdom to think about, this one not a new fate but instead a statement that serves as the culmination of those fates, that God is owed thanks for allotting them.

This tight structure with alternating metrical patterning not only creates an aesthetically interesting piece but also illustrates how the elements of the poem fit together and what the poet's overall goal might be. Some scholars try to find unity in the poem by locating an overarching theme among the fates (particularly the deaths). For examples, Neil D. Issacs (1975) argues that each negative fate is associated with a ritual death; Karen Swenson (1991) builds on his ideas to contend that each death serves society, as some sort of sacrifice and/or punishment; Stefan Jurasinski (2007) finds that all of the deaths relate to being consumed in some way; and Robert DiNapoli (2007) argues that the fates are bound together by expressing the various needs of mortals. In the context of wisdom poetry, though, these fates do not necessarily need to be unified. On the contrary, it is the variety that is important. As Hanson, Larrington, and Cavill argue, gnomic poetry is often about ordering the variety of things that exist or that can occur; in Hansen's (1988: 96) words, "the catalogues of culturally significant and representative types in *The Gifts of Men* and *The Fortunes of Men* demonstrate the possibility of organizing what reflect a just and orderly design. In conjunction with the framing argument, such a demonstration exhibits the alignment of epistemology and ideology, traditional poetic display and Christian interpretation, that I take to be the purpose of the catalogue poems."

Significantly, the many events that this poet is attempting to organize are relatively common fates in the Old English tradition. For example, the lonely fate of the exile is discussed in *The Wanderer*, where stormy weather and wolves are two of the hardships faced; Beowulf relates the story of a hanged man before going to fight the dragon; blindness is considered in *Maxims I*; the fifth piece of advice that a father gives to his son in *Precepts* is to avoid drunkenness; hawking is mentioned in *The Battle of Maldon* and *Maxims II*; the life of a *scop* is described in detail in *Widsiþ* and *Deor*, and it also appears as a possible gift in *The Gifts of Men*; and, of course, statements related to weapons and battle are ubiquitous in Old English poetry. The list is quite diverse, but clearly the majority of the issues dealt with are important to the Anglo-Saxon sensibility.

What is unique about *The Fortunes of Men*, then, is the combination of wisdom and narrative styles in which the poet presents these common ideas. When the fates are mentioned in other wisdom poems, such as *Maxims I & II* and *Precepts*, they are presented as a piece of wisdom to be learned and remembered. This poem, though, adopts a more personal tone. The tone is established from the very beginning of the poem, when the poet introduces two parents and explains the

care with which they raise their child. This opening puts all the fates to come in the perspective of a caring parent rather than an abstracted scholar, creating the pathos that Fulk and Cain mention. The narrative sections allow the poet to develop this pathos by painting a full picture of each fate and its effects.

One place that this pathos can be seen clearly is in the fate of the exile:

Sum sceal on fēpe on feorwegas
 A3: xxxPx C3: xPpx
 nȳde gongan ond his nest beran,
 A1: PxPx C3: xxPpx
 tredan ūriglāst elpēodigra,
 B1: xxPxP D1: PPSx
 frēcne foldan; āh hē feormendra
 A1: PxPx C1: xxPPx
 lȳt lifgendra, lāð biþ æghwær
 D1: PPSx A1: PxPx
 fore his wonsceaftum winelēas hæle. (*Fort* 27–32)
 C1: xxxPPx A2k: pxSpx

One will go on distant paths on foot
 by necessity and bear his provisions,
 tread the wet ground of foreign nations,
 the dangerous earth; with few living
 entertainers, the friendless one is hated
 everywhere because of miseries.

As is typical of this poem, this passage starts with a gnomic statement and then switches to a narrative-style diction that includes a variety of verse types and an instance of variation. In particular, the narrative is a sad one. The poet first creates the rather pathetic image of this man wandering around on foot carrying all of his possessions. From there he adds that the exile can wander only in foreign lands. And to end the passage, the poet explains that the exile has no friends, only enemies. The poet brings all of this together in the final verse with *winelēas hæle*, a subject that he delays for rhetorical effect. The use of *hæle* underscores the tragedy because it is a poetic word that often refers to heroes; the word could therefore remind the audience how far this man has fallen. With it, the adjective *winelēas* reiterates just how alone this man is.

Maxims I gives an analogous account of an exile:

oft mon fēreð feor bi tūne, þær him wāt frēond unwiotodne.
 aHA1: xxPxPxPx hA1: xxxPxpxx
 Winelēas, wonsælig mon genimeð him wulfas to gefēran,
 HE: pxxPSxP hA1: xxxxPxxxPx
 felafæcne dēor. Ful oft hine sē gefēra slīteð; (*MaxI* 145–7)
 E: pxSxP hA1: xxxxxxPxPx

Metrical Alternation in The Fortunes of Men

one often travels far around a homestead, where he knows he has no
certain friend.

Friendless, the unhappy man takes wolves as companions,
very treacherous animals. Very often that companion tears him.

This passage similarly emphasizes the friendless nature of the man. The gravity of the situation is made clear as the friendless man takes up with his natural enemies in lieu of human friends only to have them turn on him and eat him. Clearly, the passage gets across the tragedy of the exile's fate. It does not, however, have the same emotional effect as the passage in *The Fortunes of Men*. The poet does not create the same poetic image that his counterpart does, nor does he linger over the man's plight. Thus, the additional moment of narrative in *The Fortunes of Men* allows the audience to feel the tragic fate more keenly.

The other narrative passages of *The Fortunes of Men* likewise use detailed descriptions for a similar effect. In the case of the hanged man, for example, after a short account of his death, the poet devotes five lines to describing the man's dead body, pale and helpless as ravens come to tear out its eyes. Elsewhere, the poet twice brings the audience back to the mother and tells us that she mourns her son's death (lines 14a and 46b-7). The fortunate fates are no less vivid. Larrington (1993: 142) points out that the two sections stand in stark contrast to each other, with the first part emphasizing lifelessness and stillness while the second part is quite vibrant. The final two fates, becoming a successful *scop* or falconer, are described in triumphant details with images and actions that the audience members would no doubt recognize and, in the case of the falconer, perhaps have experienced.

These final, exultant fates can seem odd when viewed in the context of other wisdom literature. Similar poems that dwell at the beginning on the tragedy of life in this world offer an anagogic ending, pointing toward a better life in heaven. After describing the harsh realities of an exile's life, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* poets both advise the listener to think of God so that they will receive joy in heaven at the end of their days. Similarly, the *Vainglory* poet speaks of the horrible things that can happen in a proud man's life, then ends by advising men to be humble so that they will receive the reward of heaven. Next to these, the joy of becoming a *scop* or a falconer seems out of place. The context of the rest of the poem, however, shows that the poet is not interested in abstract wisdom but rather concrete stories of realistic people to illustrate his ideas. He cannot truly communicate the emotion that a person feels when going to heaven because neither he nor his audience have experienced that. Instead, he mirrors the anagogic ending with these worldly fates. The ending shows a consolation that is similar to

the other poems' in that they all end with the possibility of joy, but the *Fortunes of Men* poet does so with concrete, human experience, sharing the joys of the meadhall with the men situated therein.

DiNapoli also sees this focus on mortal concerns, and he argues that the poet "articulates a complex, coherent and tough-minded appraisal of the human condition from an almost exclusively human perspective" (2007: 147). He believes that as the poet does this, he undercuts the role of God, arguing that God is seldom mentioned, he is often an instrument instead of the subject, and his motivations for what little he does are incomprehensible (142–4). As a result, DiNapoli concludes that the poet "seeks his own wisdom in this poem outside the immediate comforts of the doctrinal assurance offered by Christianity" and that the poem "celebrates no Christian triumph over death" (147).

DiNapoli is certainly correct that the poem focuses on the human and does not reference God as much as some other gnomic poems. Nevertheless, the structure of this poem puts substantial emphasis on the figure of God as arbiter of all. Since God is central to the framing wisdom of the entire poem, the poet must have meant ultimately to tie all of the wisdom together under the auspices of God's power. This idea is further reinforced by the interlude that brings the focus to God in the middle of the poem. The metrical form of this interlude is particularly important because it changes the focus by shifting the patterning. Here, God is the subject of each aphoristic statement, and the poet quickly moves from one to the next without developing the emotional context, focusing on the variety of fates that God can distribute. In spite of the overall focus on the human situations, then, this unusual section in the middle, which would stand out due to the density of the gnomic wisdom, ties the statements about God from the beginning and end of the poem to the wisdom that is being shared, showing his place over everything.

Thus, the poet uses metrical and metrico-syntactic elements to share very common wisdom in a poem that uncommonly focuses on the individual aspects of human existence. Just as the *Maxims* poems seem to give a structure to the world at large,¹³ placing it all under God's control, so this poem organizes the various fates of men by placing them likewise under God. What is different about the poem, then, is the way in which it devotes special attention to human emotions as it does so, developing the pathos introduced at the first death, adding visceral details so that the audience can share in the experience, and even keeping the anagogic-type ending focused on the joy mortals can experience while still alive. The strategy that the poet uses to achieve

¹³ See Cavill 1999: 156–83 for a detailed explanation of how the *Maxims* poems serve as an overall explanation of society and the world in all its parts.

this effect is the reverse of the genre mixing that Old English scholars are accustomed to. Narrative poems often contain gnomes, which are seen to enhance the character development or thematic elements in some way. Because modern scholars are more accustomed to focusing on narrative poetry, the addition of this unusual genre into a well-known form seems logical. In Old English, however, wisdom poetry was also a conventional and important genre, and the *Fortunes of Men* poet develops his themes in much the same way as the *Beowulf* poet does, including another genre that helps to characterize the significance of the wisdom he shares. This poet is able to do so in a particularly interesting way by using the metrics themselves to illustrate the different aspects of his poem, marking the narrative while still keeping the focus of the poem as a whole on the wisdom.¹⁴

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The Originality of *Andreas*

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The extraordinary 1722-line Old English poem *Andreas*, preserved uniquely on fols 29v–52v of the late tenth-century Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII [s. x², SE England (Canterbury, St Augustine's? Rochester?)]), where it is by far the longest text in the manuscript, has seemed many things to modern scholars and readers over the years, combining as it does elements of cannibalism, conversion, incarceration, and inundation, all told in more or less overblown and lurid language (for an extensive bibliography up to 2007, see Remley 2009; more recent studies include Godlove 2009, Brady 2010, Michelet 2011, and North and Bintley 2016). Earlier commentators (Fritzsche 1879, Ramhorst 1885, Sarrazin 1886, Cremer 1888, and Battenwieser 1898) tried to show that *Andreas* was like *Beowulf* or the signed poems of Cynewulf; later ones attempted to assess what it was about the poem that made *Andreas* seem at once both familiar and different, occasionally grumbling that it was not like *Beowulf* or the signed poems of Cynewulf nearly enough (Brodeur 1968, Bjork 1985, and Boenig 1991a). Likewise, while a deluge of articles have considered such questions as on the one hand the poem's use of figural narrative (Hill 1966 and 1969, Trahern 1970, Hamilton 1972, Szittyay 1973, Casteen 1974, Walsh 1977, Earl 1980, and Calder 1986), and on the other its apparent departures from a putative source (Riemer 1965, Boenig 1991b, Biggs 2007, and Friesen 2008), neither approach seems ultimately to have proven wholly fruitful. While many of the figurative readings have advanced appreciation of individual parts of the poem, the fact that no surviving version of what M.R. James (1953: 453) rightly described as “a tale of wonder with no doctrinal purpose,” whether in Greek or Latin or any other language, seems particularly closely to reflect the text that underlies *Andreas* (Blatt 1930) tends to thwart too close a comparison. Moreover, the whole martial and heroic tone of *Andreas*, evident immediately in its opening lines, and including several episodes and elaborations unmatched in any analogue, seems strongly to suggest innovation on the part of a poet well-versed (as it were) in a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon traditional diction and poetic style.

In introducing such apparently inherited diction, scenes, and conceits, the *Andreas*-poet seems to be acknowledging both the power

and potential of the native form, as well as implicitly signaling his own familiarity with patristic exegetical tradition by highlighting (for example) the onomastic pun implicit in the fact that the name 'Andreas' means 'manly' or 'brave' in Greek (Robinson 1993: 229–31). Amid all this more or less myopic concern with the sources and diction of *Andreas*, it took Edward B. Irving Jr (1983; see too Faigley 1976: 19–45) to remind us that *Andreas* is, after all, a poem. Yet as a clearly Christian poem evidently rendered into the traditional rhythms of Old English verse more or less freely from (most scholars assume) a Latin prose translation of an ultimately Greek original, and as a text with language that when it does not contain phrases and scenes close to what we find elsewhere in Old English can only be matched in Old Norse (Frank 2002), *Andreas* is undoubtedly an unusual and original work, and certainly one deserving of study on its own account.

More attention might usefully focus on precisely how traditional the diction of *Andreas* was, and whether (and to what extent) the *Andreas*-poet can be shown to be basing himself not simply on a general set of inherited conventions, but on specific poems and poets that we can still identify today. As long ago as 1879, Fritzsche defined the limits of what was to become a fierce battleground in *Andreas*-studies, when he first attempted to demonstrate systematically through the identification of shared diction that the *Andreas*-poet was influenced by both Cynewulf and *Beowulf*; within twenty years Bottenwieser (1898) seemed to have settled the issue, with a detailed analysis remarkable for its comprehensiveness. If only the issue had rested there. More heat than light has been generated in a continuing debate that has lasted more than a century, and which has seen both *Andreas* and *Beowulf* attributed to Cynewulf at one time or another, with counter-arguments in each case, as various tools (beginning with Grein and Köhler 1912) became available for tracking similarities of phrasing between texts. After the first flurry, most of the arguments settled around the supposed relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf*, with the majority of critics who identified such a connection arguing that the *Andreas*-poet was borrowing from *Beowulf*, rather than the other way round, largely on the basis of supposedly 'clumsy' reworkings of shared diction in *Andreas*. It is important to note that a highly influential paper by Peters (1951), which was intended to undermine the case for a direct literary relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* by pointing out both that certain narrative elements shared between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* were also found in the Latin and Greek analogues to the former, and that many of the common phrases in the two poems could be matched to a greater or lesser extent in other surviving Old English verse, in fact preceded by two years a still more influential paper by Magoun (1953) concerning the purportedly 'oral-formulaic' quality of Old English narrative verse in general, and *Beowulf* in particular. The resulting

'oral-formulaic' debate has overshadowed the field of Anglo-Saxon literary studies for more than half a century (Kendall 1996 and Orchard 1997), with several scholars (Schaar 1956: 235–56; Orchard 2002: 163–6) returning over that period to the vexed question of the putative literary relationship between *Andreas* and *Beowulf* (and repeatedly pointing out that in his seminal paper Peters ignored or misrepresented some of the strongest indications of that link). Most recent scholarship concludes that some kind of relationship between the texts does indeed exist, but individual scholars remain split over how best to define and contextualize that connection (Hamilton 1975, Riedinger 1985, 1989, and 1993, and Funk 1997).

This paper, which almost a century and a half later on broadly accepts the conclusions of Fritzsche that the *Andreas*-poet knew both *Beowulf* and a number of 'Cynewulfian' poems, follows the lead of Powell (2002), who through the extensive and systematic use of computerized concordances and electronic databases has minutely demonstrated the close literary links between *Andreas* on the one hand and not just *Beowulf* (with which she has noted 89 parallels uniquely shared in the extant corpus), but also Cynewulf (with whose signed poems she has noted 149 uniquely shared parallels). Her work makes plain the direction of borrowing, and it also supports the comparative chronology suggested by other scholars using different means, notably Fulk (1992: 351–62 and 381–91), namely that Cynewulf's poems are earlier than *Andreas*, and *Beowulf* earlier than both. In again buttressing these broad conclusions, I have expanded Powell's analysis still further by close consideration not only of shared formulas but of rare poetic compounds and clusters of overlapping diction to suggest that the *Andreas*-poet knows and borrows freely from a palette of poems still surviving today, including *Beowulf*, all four of the signed poems of Cynewulf, both *Guthlac*-poems, and the *Phoenix* (the evidence is given in Appendix 2 below: pp. 358–70). Other less convincing evidence points to potential links with *Judith* and *The Whale*. This list of suggested sources was partly generated by consideration of uniquely shared compounds (the relevant data appear in Appendix 1 below, pp. 353–57), as well as of unique and rare shared parallels of diction; if the list of 8–10 likely or possible sources seems long, it should be pointed out that (with the exceptions of *Beowulf* and, arguably, *Guthlac A*), all these Old English poems, based on more or less identifiable Latin sources, are the product of clearly literate and Latinate authors whose own methods of poetic composition can be matched in techniques employed by Anglo-Latin poets in their own verse, and which were likely learned at school. Certainly, the highly formulaic methods of composition employed by Anglo-Saxon authors composing Latin verse seems, as we shall see, to offer a further compelling and instructive analogue, and an extra refinement offered here, in considering

supposed literary borrowings in *Andreas*, is to build on the pioneering work of Lapidge (1979), who demonstrated the extent to which formulaic patterns of composition inform Anglo-Latin verse, as I have done earlier myself (1992 and 1994). The aim of this paper is to assess the originality of *Andreas*, by examining the poem against other works that the author seems to have known and imitated, and by attempting to measure the extent of the poet's individual contribution by comparison with a mode of composition that is witnessed among Anglo-Saxon poets in both Old English and Latin.

We might conveniently begin by considering the opening lines of *Andreas*, which appear to offer parallels to the beginning of both *Beowulf* and Cynewulf's *Fates of the Apostles*, the poem that immediately follows *Andreas* in the Vercelli Book (*Andreas* 1–11a [**bold** forms can be matched in *Beowulf*; underlined forms can be matched in *Fates of the Apostles*]; I have discussed these parallels in a different context elsewhere [2002: 165–66]):

- 1 **Hwæt**, wē gefrūnan on fyrn-dagum
- 2 twelfe under tunglum tīr-ēadige haeð,
- 3 pēodnes pegnas. Nō hira **þrym** ālæg
- 4 camp-rædenne þonne cumbol hneotan, MS *cam rædenne*
- 5 syððan hīe gedældon, swā him dryhten sylf,
- 6 heofona hēah-cyning, hlyt getæhte. MS *lyt*
- 7 Þæt wæron mære men ofer eorðan,
- 8 frome folc-togan ond fyrð-hwate,
- 9 rōfe rincas, þonne **rond** **ond** **hand**
- 10 on here-felda helm ealgodon,
- 11 on meotud-wange.

Listen: we have heard in distant days of twelve heroes blessed with glory under the stars, retainers of the Lord. Their glory did not fail in fighting battles when banners clashed, after they separated as the Lord himself, the high King of the heavens, directed their lot. They were famous men across the Earth, brave war-leaders and bold in battle, foremost fighters, when shield and hand defended the helmet on the field of conflict, on the fateful ground.

The opening three lines of *Beowulf* have several features in common with the first three lines above (*Beowulf* 1–3 [**bold** forms can be matched in the corresponding passage from *Andreas*, and underlined forms in that from *Fates of the Apostles*]):

- 1 **Hwæt**, we Gār-dena in geār-dagum,
- 2 pēod-cyninga, **þrym** gefrūnon,
- 3 hū ðā æþelingas ellen fremedon.

Listen, we have heard of the power of the mighty kings of the spear-Danes in days long gone, how those noblemen did deeds of courage.

The Originality of Andreas

The parallels between these opening lines of *Andreas* (*Hwæt wē gefrūnan on ...-dagum ... þrym*) and *Beowulf* (*Hwæt wē ... in ...-dagum ... þrym gefrūnon*) are on their own hardly compelling, although it might be pointed out that the *rond ond hand* combination found in the beginning of *Andreas* at line 9b and again at line 412b is only attested elsewhere in the surviving corpus in *Beowulf*, where it also occurs twice (at lines 656a and 2609b).

In other ways, the *Andreas*-poet echoes his opening passage later on in his own text, beginning with the closely succeeding lines, which describe the fate of the apostle Matthew (*Andreas* 14–18 [*italics* indicate parallels with the preceding lines of *Andreas*]):

14 þām hālig god hlyt getēode
15 ūt on þæt īg-land þær ænig þā gīt
16 ell-þeodigra ēðles ne mihte
17 blādes brūcan. Oft him bonena hand
18 on here-felda hearde gescēode.

Holy God ordained to [Matthew's] to be abroad on that island, where still at that time no foreigner was able to enjoy the happiness of his homeland. Frequently the hand of murderous men did him violent injury in the battle-field.

Note that only the word *hlyt* ('lot') has an echo in the parallel passage from *Fates of the Apostles*: indeed, the word *hlyt* is found in extant Old English poetry only in *Andreas* (lines 6b [MS *lyt*] and 14b), and twice in the signed poems of Cynewulf (*Fates* 9b and *Elene* 820b); it might be further noted that all three poems are in the Vercelli Book. By contrast, the sequence *hlyt ... hand on here-felda* is the poet's own, unattested elsewhere in the extant corpus. Elsewhere Powell (2002: 54–104, 239–72, and 300–19) notes no fewer than 334 such echoes within the poem as a whole. Here, it might be noted that the compound *here-feld* is limited in the extant corpus to *Andreas* (lines 10a and 18a) and Cynewulf's *Elene* (lines 126a [MS *hera felda*] and 269a), again restricted to the Vercelli Book. A still further parallel to these opening lines in *Andreas* is found in another heavily heroic passage, also unmatched in the analogous Latin and Greek texts, where Andrew's disciples refuse to abandon him (*Andreas* 408–14 [*italics* indicate parallels with the preceding lines of *Andreas*]):

408 "Wē bīoð lāðe on landa gehwām,
409 folcum fracode, þonne fira bearn,
410 ellen-rōfe, æht besittap,
411 hwylc hira sēlost symle gelæste
412 hlāforde æt hilde, þonne hand ond rond
413 on beadu-wange billum forgrunden MS fore grunden
414 æt nīð-plegan nearu þrōwedon."

"We shall be despised in every land, contemptible to people, when the sons of men, renowned for their courage, hold debate as to which of them has always best served his lord in the fray when hand and shield suffered the pinch on the field of battle, ground down by swords in the play of hostility."

The compound *beadu-wange* here (line 413a), like the compound *meotud-wange* that it seems to vary (back in line 11a), is unique to *Andreas* in surviving poetry; I give a full list of such compounds in Appendix 1 below. Such a sequence suggests that the *Andreas*-poet, having first adopted and then adapted a parallel phrase, goes on to make it his own. For a parallel in Anglo-Latin verse, one might note the extent to which Aldhelm adapts earlier verse, and then repeats the adapted phrases in his own work, as I have discussed elsewhere (1994: 126–224).

The complex opening of *Fates of the Apostles* is likewise of relevance here (*Fates* 1–15; **bold** forms match those in the passage from *Beowulf* just quoted; *italic* forms can be matched in the parallel passage from *Andreas*):

- 1 *Hwæt*, ic þysne sang sīð-geōmor fand MS WÆT
- 2 on sēocum sefan, samnode wīde
- 3 **hū þā æðelingas ellen** cȳðdon,
- 4 torhte ond tīr-*eadige*. *Twel*fe wæron, MS *woron*
- 5 dædum dōm-fæste, *dryhtne* gecorene,
- 6 lēofe on life. Lof wīde sprang,
- 7 miht ond mærdō, ofer middan-geard,
- 8 *þeodnes* þegna, **þrym** unlȳtel.
- 9 Hālgan hēape *hlyt* wīsode
- 10 þær hīe *dryhtnes* æ dēman sceoldon,
- 11 reccan fore rincum. Sume on Rōme-byrig,
- 12 *frame*, fyrd-*hwate*, feorh ofgēfon
- 13 þurg Nērōnes nearwe searwe, MS *neawe*
- 14 Petrus ond Paulus. Is se apostol-hād
- 15 wīde geweorðod ofer wer-þeoda!

Listen, sad at departing, I, sick at heart, put together this poem, collected far and wide how those noblemen, famed and honour-blessed, revealed deeds of courage. Twelve there were, glory-fast in deeds, chosen by the Lord, beloved in life. The praise spread wide, the might and esteem, across the world, of the prince's thegns, no little power. Their lot directed the holy band, to where they had to glorify the Lord's law, tell it before men. Some in the city of Rome, bold, battle-brave, gave up their lives through Nero's intransigent scheming, Peter and Paul. The apostleship is widely venerated among nations of men.

The sequence in *Fates* (*Hwæt* ... *tīr-ēadige* [*t*]*wel*fe ... *dryhtne* ... *þeodnes* þegna **þrym** ... *hlyt* ... *dryhtnes* ... *frame* *fyr*d-*hwate*) is strikingly close to that in *Andreas* (*Hwæt* ... *twel*fe ... *tīr-ēadige* ... *þeodnes* þegnas ... **þrym** ...

dryhten ... hlyt ... frome ... fyrð-hwate), and there is certainly nothing in the analogous texts to suggest anything at all resembling the famously martial and heroic opening lines of the latter. Such an overlap of the same basic words in basically the same sequence strongly suggests that the *Andreas*-poet is consciously copying Cynewulf's poem; other parallels, given in Appendix 2 below, support the notion. This passage demonstrates clearly, moreover, what it is that differentiates Cynewulf from the *Beowulf*-poet, notwithstanding the possibility that Cynewulf is deliberately echoing *Beowulf* here (especially in the shared third line). In his opening lines Cynewulf seems to be showcasing a number of examples of word-play that are closely associated with his particular poetic style. Such stylistic tics include paronomasia on the similar-sounding elements *lēof-* / *lif-* / *lof(-)* (line 6), a feature that is particularly widespread in Cynewulf's own poems, as well as in poems otherwise associated with Cynewulf's style as Kintgen (1977) has indicated; a pun on Nero's name (line 13: *Nērōnes nearwe searwe*), here emphasized through rhyme, but repeated by Cynewulf in his *Juliana* (line 302: *nearo-bregdum ... Nērōn*); and the alliteration and paronomasia of the etymologically distinct terms *geweorðod* ('venerated') and *wer-þēoda* ('nations') found here in line 15 are likewise echoed in two other of Cynewulf's signed poems, namely *Christ B* ("Ðæt is þæs wyrðe þætte wer-þēode" *Christ B* 600) and twice in *Juliana* ("wīd ond weorðlic ofer wer-þēode," *Jul* 9; "hē is þæs wyrðe, þæt hine wer-þēode," *Jul* 643).

If we assume that Cynewulf is deliberately echoing the opening lines of *Beowulf* (or indeed a parallel tradition of heroic verse; the trope is discussed in detail in Parks 1987), it is important to note that he has turned his back here on the shared and communal *wē* ('we') of the opening line of the *Beowulf*-tradition, in making it clear that his is a singular composition (as the *ic* ['I'] signals), and thereby injecting some of his own characteristic elements into an otherwise inherited form. This use of the opening first-person singular form in the first line of *Fates* is particularly interesting, since later in the poem Cynewulf invokes the first-person plural form three times in similar circumstances referring to poetic composition, first at line 23 ("Hwæt, wē ēac gehyrdon be Iōhanne" ["Listen, we have also heard concerning John"]), then at line 63 ("Hwæt, wē þæt gehyrdon þurg hālige bēc" ["Listen, we have heard through holy books"]) and again at line 70a, where the same thought is briefly reprised (*Hyrde wē* ["we have heard"]). The second of these lines, which blends perfectly notions of the oral and written traditions, is indeed again something of a Cynewulfian commonplace, appearing as it does not only here in *Fates*, but also three times in *Elene* (at lines 364, 670, and 852); note too the opening half-line of *Juliana* ("Hwæt wē þæt hyrdon") and line 586 of *Christ B* ("Hwæt wē nū gehyrdan").

Yet if in *Fates* Cynewulf traces a progression from the individual

author (*ic*, line 1a) to the shared experience (*wē*, lines 23a, 63a, and 70a), it is striking that the *Andreas*-poet, here following the *Beowulf*-poet, seems deliberately to have reversed precisely that trajectory in lines which again echo *Fates*. While the opening lines of *Andreas*, quoted above, clearly celebrate a community of knowledge (*wē*, line 1a), it is notable that towards the end of the poem (more or less at the point where Cynewulf customarily introduces his own personality and characteristic runic signature), and in a passage with no parallel in the surviving Latin and Greek analogues, the *Andreas*-poet speaks of himself in the first-person singular, and of his poem (*Andreas* 1478–81a):

1478 Hwæt, ic hwīle nū hāliges lāre, MS HÆT
 1479 lēoð-giddinga, lof þæs þe worhte,
 1480 wordum wēmdre, wyrd undyrne
 1481 ofer mīn gemet.

Listen, for a time now I have proclaimed in the words of poetic song
 the teachings of the saint, the praise that was wrought, a fate unsecret,
 beyond my power.

This passage is striking for a number of reasons, not least in its use of the compound *lēoð-giddinga* (“poetic song” [line 1479a]) and the phrase *wyrd undyrne* (“a fate unsecret” [line 1480b]), both of which are uniquely shared in the extant corpus between *Andreas* and *Fates* (where they appear as *lēoð-giddunga* [line 97b] and *wurd undyrne* [line 42b] respectively). The phrase *ofer mīn gemet* (“beyond my power” [line 1481a]) is uniquely shared with *Beowulf* (line 2879a), and in the extant corpus the phrase *wordum wēmdre* (“proclaimed in words” [line 1480a]) appears only here and earlier in *Andreas* (line 740a). These lines are also marked by the use of extra alliteration, with back-linked alliteration (for the terminology, see my earlier paper [1995]) connecting line 1478b to 1479 through *l*- and 1479b to 1480 through *w*-, and with assonance on *wor*- / *word*- / *wyrd* and *wyrd undyrne* only adding to the sense that this is a passage deliberately highlighted by the poet. Such a complex interplay of repeated sounds and words both within and beyond *Andreas*, specifically with Cynewulf’s *Fates of the Apostles* and *Beowulf*, may well be held to argue strongly for the notion that the *Andreas*-poet was aware of the verse of his poetic predecessors, and deliberately identified his own place within that developing tradition.

A different kind of evidence for adaptation by the *Andreas*-poet of consciously borrowed phrases and sequences can be found in what looks like a chain of borrowings that is restricted to the poems of the Vercelli Book, apparently beginning with two repeated sequences from perhaps the most celebrated poem in the manuscript, namely *The Dream of the Rood* (78–80a and 95–100; **bold** forms can be matched

in *Elene*; *italic* forms can be matched in *Andreas*; I have also discussed these parallels elsewhere [2009]):

78 *Nū ðū miht gehȳran, hæleð mīn se lēofa,*
79 þæt ic **bealu**-wara weorc gebiden hæbbe,
80 sārra sorga.

* * *

95 *Nū ic þē hāte, hæleð mīn se lēofa,*
96 þæt ðū þās gesyððe secge mannum,
97 onwreoh *wordum* þæt hit is wuldres bēam,
98 se ðe æl-mihtig god on þrōwode
99 for man-cynnes manegum synnum
100 ond Ādōmes eald-gewyrhtum.

Now you can hear, my dear young man, what deeds of evil-doers I have endured, painful sorrows ... Now I order you, my dear young man, that you tell this vision to men, reveal in words that it is the tree of glory, on which God almighty suffered for the many sins of mankind, and for the ancient acts of Adam.

Given that Cynewulf's *Elene* also deals with the Cross, it might be thought that some overlap of diction is inevitable. Note, however, that the Cross itself is not referred to in the parallel passage (*Elene* 511–16; **bold** forms can be matched in *Dream of the Rood*; *italic* forms can be matched in *Andreas*):

511 *Nū ðū meaht gehȳran, hæleð mīn se lēofa,*
512 *hū* ār-fæst is ealles wealdend,
513 þēah wē æ-bylgð wið hine oft gewyrcen,
514 synna wunde, gif wē sōna eft
515 þāra **bealu**-*dæda* bōte gefremmaþ
516 ond þæs unrihtes eft geswīcāþ.

Now you can hear, my dear young man, how merciful is the ruler of everything, although we may often commit wickedness against him, with the wound of sins, if we immediately afterwards make amends for those evil deeds, and afterwards cease from that wrong-doing.

An important element here is the fact that these passages contain the only *bealu*-compounds in either poem, so strengthening the parallel.

When the corresponding passage from *Andreas* is considered, for which again there is no good match in the analogues, it is clear that the poet is echoing *Elene* rather than *The Dream of the Rood* (*Andreas* 595–600; **bold** forms can be matched in *Elene*; underlined forms can be matched in *Dream of the Rood*):

595 **Nū ðū miht gehȳran,** *hyse lēofesta,*
596 **hū** ūs wuldres weard **wordum** ond **dædum**
597 lufode in līfe, ond þurh **lāre** spēon

598 to þām fægeran gefēan, þær frēo mōton,
599 ēadige mid englum, eard weardigan,
600 þā ðe æfter dēaðe dryhten sēcað.

Now you can hear, dearest youth, how the guardian of glory loved us in life with words and deeds, and through his teaching has drawn us to that fair delight where they may be allowed free and blessed among the angels, to dwell in their homeland, those who after death seek the lord.

Once again, the *Andreas*-poet, having apparently borrowed a turn of phrase from Cynewulf, repeats it for his own purpose later on in his own work (*Andreas* 811–14; ***bold italics*** indicate the parallels):

811 Nū ðū miht gehyran, hyse lēofesta,
812 hū hē wundra worn wordum cȳðde,
813 swā þeah ne gelyfdon lārum sīnum
814 mōd-blinde menn.

Now you can hear, dearest youth, how he revealed a multitude of miracles through his words, even though the men blind at heart did not pay heed to his teachings.

Here it is particularly striking that in echoing his own earlier passage, the *Andreas*-poet, whether consciously or not, seems to have preserved an echo of the *luf-* / *līf-* / *-līf-* wordplay discussed above, in matching lines 597 (*lufode ... līfe ... lāre*) and 813 (*gelyfdon lārum*).

In comparing all these passages, it is apparent that the role played by compounds, both unique and shared, is significant: one might further note that in the last passage from *Andreas* above, the arresting form *mōd-blinde* (“blind at heart”) is elsewhere found in only two further poems (*Elene* 306a and *Christ C* 1187a), and such a restricted circulation of specific compounds surely warrants a fuller study of their general distribution. In Appendix 1[a] below, I count around 500 different compound nouns and adjectives in *Andreas*, of which about a third are unattested elsewhere in the extant corpus; important work has been done on such compound *hapax legomena* in Old English in general (Carr 1939 and Waldorf 1953), on the poetic corpus (Talentino 1971), and even on *Andreas* itself (Stiles 2002). This proportion, while assuredly lower than that for *Beowulf* (Brodeur 1971: 7 notes that there the proportion is well over half), is impressively high, and seems to argue for some level of conscious coining of compounds (for whatever reason) by the *Andreas*-poet. Moreover, with compounds, as with formulas, it is striking the extent to which particular poems (and poets) seem to share the same range of diction: so, for example, there are 32 compounds uniquely shared between *Beowulf* and *Andreas* in the extant corpus; 28 compounds uniquely shared between *Andreas* and the signed poems of Cynewulf in the extant corpus; and 46 uniquely shared between *Andreas* and any other single poem. In this last group,

and when the relative lengths of the poems in question are taken into account, there seems notable overlap in terms of rare compounds with *Guthlac B* and *The Phoenix*, in particular, although some striking parallels occur with (for example) *The Whale*, *Genesis A*, *Judith*, and *Azarias*, so prompting a fuller formulaic analysis, which uncovers significant further parallels at the level of the phrase in the case of both *Guthlac* poems, *The Phoenix*, and *Judith* in particular (see Appendix 2 below, pp. 358–70). Given, then, the patterns of overlapping diction both at the level of compound and formula that can be established between *Andreas* and (for example) *Beowulf* on the one hand and the *Guthlac*-poems on the other, it seems possible to see the *Andreas*-poet at work coining compounds otherwise unattested in the surviving record. One simple technique employed by the *Andreas*-poet seems to have been to take genitive phrases from the earlier poems and turn them into compounds unique in the corpus: thus what in *Beowulf* appears as *under heofones hwealf* (line 576a: “under the vault of heaven”) appears twice in *Andreas* as *under heofon-hwealfe* (lines 545a and 1402a: “under heaven-vault”); what in *Beowulf* appears as *morðres scyldig* (line 1683a: “guilty of murder”) appears in *Andreas* as *morðor-scyldige* (line 1599b: “murder-guilty”); what in *Guthlac A* appears as *bānes bryce* (line 698a: “the breaking of bone”) appears in *Andreas* as *bān-gebrec* (line 1442a: “bone-breaking”). Note that in what is an evident echo of the same collocation at *Andreas* 1473–4, the phrase appears as *bān gebrocen*. Also of interest here is the manuscript reading *līc lālan* at *Andreas* 1443a, corresponding to *līces lāla* (“body’s wound”) in *Guthlac A* 699a; while Krapp (1906) and Brooks (1961) emend *Andreas* 1443a to read *līces lālan*, one might prefer to read another otherwise unattested compound arising from a genitive phrase (*līc-lālan*), and resolve the resulting metrical difficulty in other ways (for example by reading *ond līc-lālan*). Again, the *Andreas*-poet comes across as a thoughtful and deliberate innovator working within an identifiable tradition.

So much is evident when other specific passages from *Andreas* are analyzed. In another clear borrowing from Cynewulf, who is himself at this point apparently modeling his Old English lines on some Latin poetry by Caelius Sedulius (as I have discussed elsewhere [2003]), the *Andreas*-poet again essentially repeats the same sequence of words (*Christ B* 481–90 [***bold italic*** forms can be matched in *Andreas*]):

- 481 *“Farað nū geond ealne* yrmene grund,
482 *geond wīd-wegas,* weoredum cȳðað,
483 *bodiað* ond brēmað *beorhtne gelēafan,*
484 *ond fulwiað* folc under roderum.
485 Hweorfað to hæþnum, hergas brēotaþ, MS *heofenum*
486 *fyllað* ond fēogað, fēondscype dwæscað,
487 *sibbe sāwað* on sefan manna
488 *þurh meahta spēd.* *Ic ēow* mid wunige,

489 forð on frōfre, ond ēow friðe healde
490 strengðu *staþol-fæstre* on stōwa gehwāre."

Go now throughout all the expansive earth, throughout the wide paths, and make known to the masses, preach and proclaim the glittering faith, and baptize the people under the skies. Turn to the heathens, shatter the idols, cast them down and treat them with contempt, wipe out enmity, sow peace in men's hearts, through the abundance of your powers. I shall remain with you henceforth as a comfort, and shall keep you in peace with a steadfast strength in every place.

Parallels:

<481>	<i>Farað nū geond ealle</i>	eorðan scēatas	<i>And</i> 332
<483>	<i>Bodiað</i> æfter burgum	<i>beorhtne gelēafan</i>	<i>And</i> 335
<489>	ofer foldan fæðm.	<i>Ic ēow freoðo healde</i>	<i>And</i> 336
	ferð-gefēonde!	<i>Ic þē friðe healde</i>	<i>And</i> 915
	nis þē tō frēcne.	<i>Ic þē friðe healde</i>	<i>And</i> 1432
<490>	<i>staðol-fæst</i> styrend,	<i>in stōwa gehwām</i>	<i>And</i> 121

It is interesting to note that in recalling this passage, the *Andreas*-poet seems to have interpolated a reminiscence of *Beowulf* at precisely the point where Cynewulf himself had used another phrase (line 482a: *geond wīd-wegas*) that also appears in *Beowulf* (lines 840a and 1704a; see further Powell 2002: 133–5); the element *wīd-* is common to all the poems at this point, and potentially sparked off the substitution (*Andreas* 332–9 [*bold italic* forms can be matched in Cynewulf's verse; underlined forms in *Beowulf*]):

332	<i>"Farað nū geond ealle</i>	eorðan scēatas	MS c corrected from <i>t</i> in <i>scēatas</i>
333	emne swā <i>wīde</i>	swā wæter bebūgeð,	
334	oððe stede-wangas	stræte gelicgaþ.	
335	<i>Bodiað</i> æfter burgum	<i>beorhtne gelēafan</i>	
336	ofer foldan fæðm.	<i>Ic ēow freoðo healde.</i>	
337	Ne ðurfan gē on þā fōre	frætwe lædan,	
338	gold nē seolfor.	<i>Ic ēow</i> gōða gehwæs	
339	on ēowerne āgenne dōm	ēst āhwette."	

Go now throughout all the corners of the earth, even as widely as the water encircles, or the local plains provide a path. Preach throughout the towns the glittering faith, across the bosom of the earth; I shall keep you safe. You need not bring trappings on that traveling, gold or silver; I shall afford you the favor of every good thing, according to your own estimation.

Parallels:

<332–4>	cwæð þæt se ælmihtiga	eorðan worhte	<i>Beo</i> 92–93
	wlite-beorhtne wang	swā wæter bebūgeð	

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	ealne wīde-ferhþ weras ehtigað	Beo 1222–23
	efne swā sīde swā sǣ bebūgeð	
<332>	<i>Farað nū geond ealne</i> yrmenne grund	Christ B 481
<334>	<i>æfter stede-wange</i> hwær sēo <i>stōw</i> sīe	El 675
	<i>stān</i> -gefōgum on þām <i>stede-wange</i>	El 1020
<335>	<i>bodiað</i> ond brēmað <i>beorhtne gelēafan</i>	Christ B 483

The *Andreas*-poet ignores what is most apparent in the parallel extract from Cynewulf, namely the insistent use of imperatives (eleven in the first seven lines); Christ's injunction to his apostles, as presented in *Christ B*, is here (ironically in a speech by Andreas reported to the disguised Christ himself) reduced in *Andreas* to the two essentials (*Farað ... Bodiað* ["go ... preach"]). The single compound in the passage from *Andreas*, *stede-wangas* ("local plains"), is, as we have seen, part of a sequence of rare or unique *-wang*-compounds in the poem, and is repeated later in poem (at line 774), while a phrase addressed to the disciples as a group that is part of the original Cynewulf sequence, "Ic ēow freoðo healde" (line 336b: "I shall keep you safe"; cf. *Christ B* 488–9) becomes a later leitmotif in *Andreas* (at lines 915b and 1432b), where it is addressed, recast appropriately enough in the singular, by God to Andreas himself; the final line of the Cynewulf-passage is recalled by the *Andreas*-poet later on in his poem, a re-use of the same remembered source-passage analogous to what we have seen above. None of these features are reflected in the Latin analogue, which reads as follows (Blatt 1930:45/5–8):

et tradidit nobis hoc praeceptum, quando pergeremus ad praedicandum
evangelium eius, ne portaremus nobiscum nec pecuniam nec peram,
neque panem, nec caltiamentum in pedibus nostris, neque virgam in
manibus, set neque duas tunicas.

he gave us this command, when we set out to preach his gospel, that
we were not to carry with us neither money nor a wallet, nor bread, nor
sandals on our feet, nor a staff in our hands, nor two tunics.

What the Latin does exhibit, however, is persistent alliteration on *p*-, an artistic embellishment that the *Andreas*-poet may be mimicking through the use of extra alliteration on *s*-, *-w*-, *-l*-, and *f*-. Yet again, it seems that even as the *Andreas*-poet builds on and acknowledges his sources, he seems keen to make the text his own.

A further case in point is offered by a later passage describing how Andreas miraculously dries up the wondrous flood that had emerged from the marble pillar (*Andreas*, lines 1581–90; here again **bold** forms can be matched in other OE verse; *italic* forms can be matched elsewhere in *Andreas*; underlined forms are unique to *Andreas*):

1581 **Smeolt wæs se sige-wang**, symble wæs dryge
1582 folde fram flōde, swā his fōt gestōp.

1583 Wurdon **burg-ware** blīðe on mōde,
 1584 *ferhð-gefeonde*. þā wæs forð cumen
 1585 gēoc æfter gyrne. Geofon swaðrode MS heofon
 1586 þurh hāliges hæs, hlyst yst forgeaf,
 1587 *brim-rād* gebād. þā se beorg tohlād,
 1588 *eorð-scræf* egeslic, ond þær in forlēt
 1589 flōd fæðmian, **fealewe wæg**as,
 1590 gēotende gegrind grund eall forswealg.

Smooth was the victory-plain, the earth was immediately dry of the flood where his foot trod. The city-dwellers were happy in heart, joyous of soul; then had appeared comfort after sorrow. The ocean had subsided at the bidding of the holy man; the storm gave up its sound: the sea-swell stood still. Then the mountain split asunder, a terrible earth-rending, and let the flood be enfolded in there, the fallow waves; the depths swallowed the whole surging swirl.

Parallels:

<1581>	smolt wæs se sige-wong	ond sele nīwe	GuthA742
	smylte is se sige-wong	sun-bearo lixeð	Phoen 33
<1583>	<i>burg-ware</i>		[COMMONPLACE]
<1584>	<i>ferð-gefeonde</i>	ic þē friðe healde	And 915
<1588>	<i>eorþ-scræf</i>		[COMMONPLACE]
<1587>	blæce brim-rāde	blīð-heort wunode	And 1262
<1589>	gesihð him biforan	fealwe wēgas	Wan 46

Once more, the analogous passage in the Latin is relatively unadorned (Blatt: 1930: 89/18–91/11):

Et statim exiens de carcere, deficiente aqua ante apostolum ... statim terra aperuit os suum et degluctavit [*sic*: read *degluttivit*] aquam.

And immediately, as he was leaving the prison, while the water was retreating before the apostle ... immediately the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the water.

By contrast, this passage from *Andreas* is again stuffed with extra sound-effects, as well as other signs of artistry. Presumably in the context of land reappearing from under the waters, the primarily visual effect of the half-line “folde fram flōde” (“earth from the flood,” line 1582a), emphasized through extra alliteration, is rather pleasing, and can indeed be matched elsewhere in Old English verse (at *GenA* 156–7; *Christ B* 805–6; *ChristC* 999; *Ridd07*; *JD I* 2; *Ridd66* 4; *Ridd74*; *Beo* 1361; *SolSat* 158.). Still more impressively, I count no fewer than six separate examples of different kinds of rhyme and assonance in the course of these ten lines (*flōde ... fōt gestōp ... mōde ... flōd*; *ferhð- ... forð*; *hlyst yst*; *brim-rād gebād ... tohlād*; *gegrind grund*; *eall forswealg*). It may offer a

glimpse of the *Andreas*-poet's working methods that four of the only five words that can be paralleled in the Latin analogues (*tohlād ... flōd ... grund ... forswēalg*) partake in four separate such sound-effects; one suspects that the *Andreas*-poet, again asserting his independence, may have based his aural embellishments precisely on that Latin bedrock. The opening half-line of this passage, extraordinarily enough, can be matched in two further places in extant Old English, namely *Guthlac A* and *Phoenix*, both of which poems have been connected in terms of style and content not only with the signed poems of Cynewulf, but also with *Andreas*. Also notable here is the number of compounds (five in ten lines), two of which are unique to *Andreas*. Both of these unique compounds not only contribute to the sound-play already noted, but are found elsewhere in the poem (at lines 915a [*ferð-gefēonde*] and 1262a [*brim-rāde*]).

As before, it looks like the *Andreas*-poet has deliberately manufactured a unique compound based on earlier poetry of his acquaintance. Twice in *Elene*, Cynewulf employs the phrase *ferhð gefēonde* ("a spirit rejoicing"; lines 174a and 990a), both times in immediate apposition to preceding terms for 'mind' or 'heart' (*sefa*, line 173b; *mōd*, line 989b). By contrast, the *Andreas*-poet seems to create an adjectival compound *ferhð-gefēonde* ("joyous of soul") that is unmatched in the extant corpus, and refers here to the Mermedonians, as it had earlier to Andreas and his company (line 915a). The other compound unique to *Andreas* in this passage is *brim-rād* ("sea-swell"), the second appearance of which in the poem is in the middle of a truly extraordinary (not to say original) passage with no parallel in the Latin at all (*Andreas*, lines 1253–65; here again **bold** forms can be matched in other Old English verse; *italic* forms can be matched elsewhere in *Andreas*; underlined forms are unique to *Andreas*):

1253 þā se hālg a wæs under heolstor-scūwan,
1254 **eorl ellen-heard**, ondlange niht
1255 **searo-þancum beseted**. Snāw eorðan band
1256 **winter-geworpum**. Weder cōledon
1257 heardum **hægel-scūrum**, swylce hrīm ond forst,
1258 hāre hild-stapan, hāleða ēðel
1259 lucon, lēoda gesetu. Land wæron frēorig
1260 **cealdum cyle-gicelum**, clang wæteres þrym
1261 ofer **ēa-strēamas**, is brycgade
1262 blæce brim-rāde. **Blīð-heort** wunode
1263 *eorl unforcūð*, *elnes gemyndig*,
1264 *þrist ond þroht-heard* in **þrēa-nēdum**
1265 **winter-cealdan** niht.

Then the holy man, the warrior hard in valour, was encompassed with cunning thoughts for the whole length of the night, under the shades

of darkness. Snow bound the earth with wintry drifts; the air grew cold with hard showers of hail; and likewise rime and frost, hoary battle-striders, locked up the heroes' homeland, the dwellings of men. The lands were frozen with cold icicles of frost; the water's force shrank; over river-streams, the shiny sea-swell, the ice built a bridge. Happy in spirit, the undaunted warrior, mindful of valour, bold and strong to endure, waited in dire distress the winter-cold night.

Parallels:

<1254>	eorl ellen-heard	oreþe gebrēdan	GuthB 1165
<1255>	besettan searo-cræftum	ond þā in seolfren fæt	El 1025
<1256>	ne winter-geweorp	ne wedra gebregd	Phx 57
<1257>	hægel-scūr		[COMMONPLACE]
<1260>	caldum cyle-gicelum	cnyseð ænigne	Phx 59
<1261>	ēa-strēam		[COMMONPLACE]
<1262>	blīð-heort		[COMMONPLACE]
<1263>	<i>eorl unforcūð</i> , ānre nū gēna		And 475
	ond þær inēode <i>elnes gemyndig</i>		And 1001
	ēadig elnes gemyndig	spræc to his	GuthB 1294
	onbeht-þegne		
<1264>	þegnas þroht-hearde ,	þafigan	And 402
	ne woldon		
	<i>þrist</i> ond þroht-heard	þrymman scēocan	And 1139
	þroht-heardne þegn	þriðdan sīðe	And 1391
	þingode þroht-herd	bæd þrym-cyning	El 494
	þrēa-nēd		[COMMONPLACE]
<1265>	winter-ceald		[COMMONPLACE]

This striking description of the wintry landscape in Mermedonia, delimited by an envelope-pattern (*eorl ... -heard ... niht ... eorl ... -heard ... niht*), is unusually rich in monosyllabic nouns, adjectives, and finite verbs (excluding the verb 'to be'); I count no fewer than thirteen examples in these twelve-and-a-half lines (*eorl ... niht ... [s]nāw ... band ... hrīm ... forst ... [l]and ... clang ... þrym ... īs ... eorl ... þrist ... niht*), giving the whole description a distinctly clipped and choppy feel. It may be relevant in this context that the passage is also rich in compounds (again, I count thirteen), many of which are themselves comprised in part or in whole of monosyllabic elements. Several commentators have highlighted the boldness of the *Andreas*-poet's personification of rime and frost with the apparently unique compound *hild-stapan* ('battle-striders'; the compound is discussed by Clemoes 1995: 267), and it is notable that another similarly figurative compound *bēod-gæst* (line 1088a), which, whether it signifies 'ghost at the table' or 'guest at the table' clearly refers to hunger (see Jagger 2002: 253),

is likewise unique to the poem. In such unparalleled usages, we can perhaps see the artistry and originality of the *Andreas*-poet at his best.

* * *

The purpose of the above analysis has been to identify the *Andreas*-poet as one of a number of Anglo-Saxon authors who, whether they were composing poetry in Latin or Old English, nonetheless made full and free use both of inherited formulas from a wider shared tradition, as well as specific parallels from poems still surviving today. In so publicly aligning himself as part of that developing tradition, the *Andreas*-poet invites his sensitive audience to identify his allusions, whether reinforced by repetition, or sound-play, or word-play, or arresting coinage, or some combination thereof. It is a blatant, self-reflexive ploy that has perhaps blinded and confused modern commentators by its disturbing obviousness; but it is a technique that allows us to see some part of the innovation and interpretation that has been introduced. At all events, the *Andreas*-poet stands revealed as an idiosyncratic artist, well aware of his place in the developing sequence of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and confident of his own contribution. The above analysis also reveals that the *Andreas*-poet was not alone, and raises the exciting possibility for future scholarship of addressing Anglo-Saxon poets on their own terms, within a bilingual culture of poetic composition that both subverts and subsumes aspects of what has sometimes been seen as a series of strict binaries defining Anglo-Saxon verse: oral/literate; native/imported; secular/Christian; ancient/innovative; vernacular/Latin; lay/learned. Close comparative study of Anglo-Latin techniques of poetic composition, particularly with regard to the reuse and recasting of remembered earlier verse in a context where named and chronologically identifiable poets are at issue, as I have argued elsewhere (2010 and 2014), may also open the way for a more nuanced comparative chronology of largely undated Old English poems and largely anonymous Old English poets employing parallel methods. Certainly, the originality and individuality of a great number of Anglo-Saxons poets composing in both languages are thereby thrown into sharp relief.

Twice, at either end of *Andreas*, the poet uses the phrase *nī(o)wan stefne* (lines 123a and 1303a), where it seems to signify a 'new voice' or a 'fresh voice,' first that of God, and then that of the devil. Within the surviving poetic corpus, it is notable that *Andreas* contains far more occurrences of the noun *stefn* than any other poem (there are eighteen occurrences at 56b, 61b, 92b, 96b, 123a, 167b, 291b, 537b, 722b, 738b, 873b, 1054b, 1126b, 1303a, 1360b, 1399b, 1429a, and 1456a), and this multiplicity of voices cannot be matched in the analogous texts. But the phrase itself is a loaded one, given the built-in ambiguity of the noun-form *stefn*, which (dependent on gender, masked here by the weak

form of the adjective), can mean 'period of time,' 'voice,' or 'stem (of a tree),' and the same half-line *nī(o)wan stefne* also occurs twice each in three other surviving poems (with at least two of which the *Andreas*-poet seems to have been familiar), namely *Genesis A* (lines 1555b and 1886a), Cynewulf's *Elene* (lines 1060a and 1127a), and *Beowulf* (lines 1789a and 2594a). But in every one of these other cases, the phrase seems to mean 'another time,' or 'yet again.' It seems utterly characteristic of the playful originality of the *Andreas*-poet that in adopting an inherited expression he should add a twist to its meaning, and then make it his own through repetition. For as we have seen, it is the distinctive mark of the *Andreas*-poet, in remembering and recycling aspects of an ancient verse tradition, and in echoing familiar words and works for his own artistic purposes, to speak for all Anglo-Saxon poets, whether composing in Latin or Old English, *nīwan stefne*, not only 'yet again', but 'with a new voice'.

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Appendix 1: Compounds in *Andreas*

(emended forms are marked with an asterisk; this list augments that of Powell 2002: 164–5)

[a] Unique nominal and adjectival compounds in *Andreas* [159 items]

āclāc-cræft ‘monstrous art’ [1362b]; *æg-flota* ‘wave-floater’ [258a]; *æl-myrce* ‘foreign border-dwellers’ or ‘completely black’ [432a]; *ār-wela* ‘sea-domain’ [853a]; *ār-ȝð* ‘oceanwave’ [532b]; *bān-gebrec* ‘bone-breaking’ [1442a]; *beadu-cræft* ‘battle-skill’ [219a]; *beadu-cwealm* ‘battle-slaying’ [1702a]; *beadu-wang* ‘battle field’ [413a]; *bēod-gæst* ‘ghost at the table’, or ‘guest at the table’, ‘hunger’ [1088a]; *bill-hete* ‘sword-hatred’ [78b]; *blæd-gifa* ‘giver of prosperity’ [84a and 656a]; *bord-stæð* ‘ship’s rigging’ (?) [442a]; *brim-rād* ‘surge of water’ [1262a and 1587a]; *brim-stæð* ‘seawall’ [496a]; *brond-stæfn* ‘high-prowed’? [504a]; *brūn-wann* ‘dusky-dark’ [1306a]; *cald-heort* ‘cold-hearted’ [138a]; *camp-ræden(n)* ‘state of war’ [4a* (MS *cam rædenne*)]; *ceaster-hof* ‘town-dwelling’ [1237a]; *cine-bald* ‘bold as a king’ [171a* (MS *cire baldum*)]; *clūster-cleofa* ‘prison cell’ [1021a]; *dēað-ræs* ‘sudden rush’ [995b]; *dēað-rēow* ‘murderously cruel’ [1314a]; *dēað-wang* ‘death-plain’ [1003b]; *dim-scūa* ‘dark shadow’ [141a]; *dolg-benn* ‘gaping wound’ [1397a]; *dolg-slege* ‘wounding blow’ [1244a and 1475a]; *dōm-āgende* ‘possessing authority’ [570a]; *duru-pegan* ‘door-keeper’ [1090b]; *eador-geard* ‘vein-enclosure’? ‘life-enclosure’ [1181b]; *ēag-sýne* ‘visible to the eye’ [1550b]; *ēa-lād* ‘water-way’ [441a]; *ēa-liðend* ‘sea-farer’ [251b]; *ecg-heard* ‘edge-hard’ [1181a]; *fæted-sinc* ‘plated treasure’ [478a]; *farod-riðende* ‘ploughing through the sea’ [440a]; *farod-stræt* ‘sea-path’ [311b and 898a]; *feorh-ræd* ‘soul-benefit’ [1654a]; *fer(h)ð-gefeonde* ‘soul-rejoicing’ [915 and 1584a]; *fetor-wrās(e)n* ‘tight bond’ [1107a]; *fir(i)gend-strēam* ‘mighty ocean’ [390 and 1573a]; *folc-sceaða* ‘people-enemy’ [1593a]; *forht-ferð* ‘afraid at heart’ [1549 and 1596a]; *freoðo-lēas* ‘without peace’ [29b]; *frum-ræden(n)* ‘previous arrangement’ [147b]; *frum-weorc* ‘original work’ [804a]; *fȳr-gnāst* ‘fire-spark’ [1546a]; *fȳrhð-lufe* ‘heart-love’ [83a]; *fȳr-mæl* ‘fire-mark’ [1134a]; *fȳrn-sægen* ‘ancient tradition’ [1489b]; *fȳrn-sceaþa* ‘ancient enemy’ [1346a]; *gegn-slege* ‘exchange of blows’ [1356a]; *gnorn-hof* ‘dwelling of sorrow’ [1008b and 1043a]; *grund-weg* ‘earth way’ [582a]; *gryn-smið* ‘evil-doer’ [917a]; *gryre-hwīl* ‘terror-time’ [468a]; *gūð-frec* ‘battle-eager’ [1117a]; *gūð-geðingu* (-geþingo) ‘time of war’ [1022b and 1043b]; *hand-hrine* ‘touch of the hand’ [1000a* (MS *han hrine*)]; *hēa-fod-maga* ‘close relative’ [942b* (MS *heafod magū*)]; *hell-cræft* ‘hellish skill’ [1102a]; *hell-træf* ‘hellish temple’ [1691b]; *heofon-hālig* ‘heavenly

holy' [728a]; *heofon-hwealf* 'heaven-vault' [545a and 1402a]; *heofon-lēoma* 'heavenly radiance' [838a]; *heofon-þrym(m)* 'heavenly majesty' [481b and 1720a]; *heolstor-loc*a 'dark prison' [144b and 1005a]; *heolstor-scūwa* 'dark shadow' [1253b]; *heoro-grædig* (*heoru-*) 'ravenously greedy' [38a and 79b]; *heoru-dolg* 'sword-wound' [942a]; *herig-weard* 'temple-guardian' [1124a]; *hete-rōf* 'hatefully hostile' [1420a]; *hilde-bedd* 'battle-bed' [1092b* (MS *hildbedd*)]; *hilde-þrym(m)* 'battle-might' [1032b]; *hild-frome* 'battle-eager' [1202a]; *hild-stapa* 'battle-strider' [1258a]; *holm-weard* 'ocean-guardian' [359b]; *holm-weg* 'ocean path' [382b]; *horn-scip* 'peaked ship' [274a]; *husc-word* 'offensive speech' [669b]; *inwit-wrās(e)n* 'cruel chain' [63b and 946b]; *land-rest* 'earth-bed,' 'grave' [781a]; *lār-cwide* 'teaching' [674a]; *lēod-hete* 'people-hostility' [112b, 1138b, and 1149b]; *lēod-mearc* 'territory' [286b and 777b]; *lēoð-word* 'poetic word' [1488b]; *lid-weard* 'boat-guard' [244b]; *lid-wērig* 'weary of voyaging' [482a]; *lif-neru* 'life-saving' [1089b]; *lind-gecrod* 'shield-troop' [1220b]; *lyft-gelāc* 'air-motion' [827 and 1552a]; *mā-craeftig* 'superior in skill' [257 and 472a]; *mago-rædend* 'counsellor of men' [1461a]; *mān-genīðla* 'evil enemy' [916b]; *mān-slagu* 'evil blow' [1218a]; *meodu-scerwen* 'pouring away of mead' [1526b]; *meotud-wang* 'field of fate' [11a]; *mere-bāt* 'sea-boat' [246b]; *mere-þissa* (*-þyssa*) 'sea-burster,' 'ship' [257b and 446b]; *mete-bearfende* 'lacking food' [27b and 136b]; *mis-gehygd* 'evil thought' [772a]; *mōd-geþyldig* 'mind-patient' [981b]; *mōd-hord* 'mind-hoard' [172b]; *mōd-rōf* 'brave-minded' [1496a* (MS *mod rofe*)]; *morðor-cofa* 'wicked prison' [1004b]; *morðor-craeft* 'wicked skill' [177a]; *morðor-scyldig* 'wicked guilty' [1599b]; *morgen-torht* 'morning-bright' [241b]; *nēad-cofa* 'forced prison' [1309a]; *nearo-nēd* 'forced constraint' [102a]; *nīð-hata* 'cruel enemy' [834a]; *nīð-plega* 'cruel play' [414a]; *on-cyð-dæd* 'harmful deed' [1179b]; *ond-wist* 'place to live' [1540a]; *ræd-snottor* 'wise in counsel' [473b]; *sæ-flota* 'sea-floater' [381a]; *sæ-hengest* 'sea-stallion,' 'ship' [488a]; *sæ-holm* 'sea-swell' [529b]; *sæl-wāg* 'wall-building' [1493a* (MS *sæl wange*)]; *sæ-wērig* 'sea-weary' [826 and 862a]; *sand-hlið* 'sand-hill' [236a]; *scin-gelāc* 'devilish play' [766a]; *scip-fērend* 'ship-voyager' [250b]; *scip-weard* 'ship-guardian' [297b]; *scyld-hata* 'guilty hater' [85b, 1047a, and 1147a]; *secg-plega* 'sword-play' [1353a]; *seolh-pæð* 'seal-path' [1714a]; *seono-dolg* 'sinew-wound' [1406a]; *sige-brōðor* 'victory-brother' [183b]; *sige-torht* 'victory-bright' [1246a* (MS *sigel torht*)]; *sinc-gifu* 'treasure-gift' [1509a]; *sinc-hroden* 'treasure-laden' [1673a]; *sorg-byrþen* 'sorrow-brewing' [1532b]; *strēam-faru* 'stream-passage' [1576a]; *strēam-welm* 'stream-surge' [495b]; *sylf-æta* 'self-eater,' 'cannibal' [175b]; *symbol-gifa* 'feast-giver' [1417a]; *tæl-met* 'measured number' [113b]; *tigel-fāg* 'tile-adorned' [842a]; *þrȳð-bearn* 'son of power' [494a]; *þrȳð-cining* 'king of power' [436b]; *þrȳð-weorc* 'work of power' [773b]; *wæl-grædig* 'slaughter-greedy' [135a]; *wæl-wang* 'slaughter-field' [1226a]; *wæter-brōga* 'water-terror' [197b and 456b]; *waroð-faruð* 'swirling eddy' [197a]; *waruð-gewinn* 'wave-conflict' [439a]; *weder-burg*

'temperate city' [1697a]; *wiðer-hyðig* 'of contrary thought' [675a]; *wið-fæðme* 'of wide expanse' [240b and 533a]; *wið-rynig* 'wide-running' [1507a]; *wil-þegu* 'pleasant feast' [153b]; *wīte-bend* 'cruel bond' [108b and 1561a]; *word-hlēoðor* 'the sound of words' [93b and 708a]; *word-latu* 'word-delay' [1522a]; *word-loca* 'word-store' [470b]; *wudu-bāt* 'wooden ship' [905b]; *wuldor-spēdig* 'gloriously profitable' [428a].

[b] Nominal and adjectival compounds unique to Andreas and Beowulf [32 items]

ær-geweorc 'ancient work' [And 1235a; Beo 1679a]; *bān-hring* 'bone-ring', 'vertebra' [And 150a; Beo 1567a]; *beadu-lāc* 'battle-sport' [And 1118b; Beo 1561a]; *bēag-sæl* 'ring-hall' [And 1657a; Beo 1177a (as *bēag-sele*)]; *bēor-þegu* 'beer-drinking' [And 1533a; Beo 117a and 617b]; *blōð-fāg* 'blood-stained' [And 1405a; Beo 2060b]; *bre(o)go-stōl* 'princely seat' [And 209a; Beo 2196a, 2370a, and 2389a]; *eald-gesīð* 'old retainer' [And 1104b; Beo 853b]; *fāmīg-heals* 'foamy-necked' [And 497a; Beo 218a, 1909a]; *geōmor-gidd* 'song of mourning' [And 1548a; Beo 3150a]; *gūð-(ge)weorc* 'battle-deed' [And 1066a; Beo 678a, 981b, and 1825a]; *gūð-ræs* 'battle-attack' [And 1531b; Beo 1577b, 2426b, and 2991a]; *gūð-searo* 'battle-gear' [And 127a; Beo 215a and 328a]; *heaðo-liðend* 'war-traveller' [And 426a; Beo 1798a and 2955a]; *heoru-sweg* 'sword-stroke' [And 952a; Beo 1590a]; *hild(e)-freca* 'war-fighter' [And 126a and 1070a; Beo 2205a and 2366a]; *hild-lata* 'war-sluggard' [And 233b; Beo 2846a]; *horn-fisc* (*hron-*) 'whale' [And 370b; Beo 540b (the word also appears in prose in *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, on the links of which to *Beowulf*, see Orchard 2002: 22–39)]; *horn-gēap* 'wide-gabled' [And 668a; Beo 82a]; *lind-gestealla* 'shield-comrade' [And 1344a; Beo 1973a]; *mōd-geōmor* 'sad at heart' [And 1113a, 1708a; Beo 2894b]; *sæ-bāt* 'sea-boat' [And 438b and 490b; Beo 633 and 895b]; *sæ-lād* 'sea-journey' [And 511a; Beo 1139b and 1157a]; *scūrheard* 'storm-hardened' [And 1133a; Beo 1033a]; *searo-net* 'armour-net' [And 64a and 943a* (MS *searo mettū*); Beo 406a]; *sele-ræðend* 'hall-counsellor' [And 659a; Beo 51b and 1346a]; *sinc-gestrēon* 'rich treasure' [And 1656b; Beo 1092b and 1226a]; *stān-fāg* 'stone-decorated' [And 1236a; Beo 320a]; *wæter-eg(e)sa* 'water-terror' [And 375b and 435b; Beo 1260a]; *wīn-ræced* 'wine-hall' [And 1159a; Beo 714b and 993b]; *yð-lād* 'wave-crossing' [And 499b* (MS *yð lafe*); Beo 228a]; *yð-lid(a)* 'wave-traveller' [And 278 and 445a; Beo 198b].

[c] Nominal and adjectival compounds unique to Andreas and
Cynewulf [28 items]

brim-pisa 'ocean speeder' [And 1657b and 1699b; El 238a]; *dōm-weorðung* 'glorious worth' [And 355b and 1006b; El 146b]; *ēad-fruma* 'source of blessedness' [And 1292a; ChristB 532a]; *ēad-gifa* (-u) 'giver of blessedness' [And 74 and 451a; ChristB 546a; Jul 276a, 502a, and 563a]; *gāst-gelhygd* 'innermost thought' [And 861b; Jul 148a]; *gūð-gelāca* 'war-player' [And 1600a; El 43b]; *hæðen-gild* 'heathen-rite' [And 1102b; Fates 47a; Jul 15 and 22b]; *hand-gewinn* 'hand-conflict' [And 186b; Jul 526a]; *hearm-lēoð* 'song of grief' [And 1127b and 1342b; Jul 615b]; *here-feld* 'battle-field' [And 10a and 18a; El 126 and 269a]; *hilde-wōma* 'war-tumult' [And 218b; Jul 136 and 663b]; *hlīn-ræced* 'grate-building' [And 1463a; Jul 243a]; *hlīn-scūwa* 'grate-shadow' [And 1071a; Jul 544a]; *hosp-word* 'insulting word' [And 1315b; Jul 189b]; *lagu-fæsten* 'water-fastness' [And 398b and 825b; El 249a and 1016a]; *lār-smið* 'lore-smith' [And 1220a; El 203b]; *lēoð-gidding* 'poetic song' [And 1479a; Fates 97b]; *lim-sēoc* 'limb-sick' [And 579a; El 1213a]; *mān-frēa* 'lord of evil' [And 1313a; El 941a; Jul 546a]; *or-cnāwe* 'well known' [And 770b; El 229a]; *sige-spēd* (*sigor*-) 'mighty power' [And 646a, 909a and 1435a; El 1171a]; *sinc-weorðung* 'treasure-gift' [And 272 and 477a; El 1218a]; *torn-geñiðla* 'bitter enemy' [And 1230b; El 568a and 1306a]; *þing-gemearc* 'appointed time' [And 148a; El 3a]; *þing-stede* 'meeting-place' [And 1098a; ChristB 497a]; *þroht-heard* 'hard in patience' [And 402a, 1139a, 1264a, and 1391a; El 494a]; *wiðer-feohtend* 'adversary' [And 1183a; Jul 664b]; *word-laðu* 'eloquence' [And 635b; ChristB 664].

[d] Nominal and adjectival compounds unique to Andreas and
any other poem [46 items]

[arranged alphabetically by poem]

ācol-mōd 'fearful in mind' [And 377a, 1595b; Az 167a]; *æht-geweald* 'power of possession' [And 1110a; Az 26a]; *wīd-fērende* 'far-travelling' [And 279b; Az 130b];
hell-fūs 'destined for hell' [And 50a; ChristC 1123a]; *þeod-bealo* 'great evil' [And 1136a; ChristC 1267a];
ealh-stede 'heathen temple' [And 1642a; Dan 673a];
wæg-faru 'sea-voyage' [And 923a; Ex 298a];
æsc-berend 'spear-bearer' [And 47a, 1076a, 1537a; GenA 2041a]; *gold-burg* 'gold-city' [And 1655a; GenA 2551a]; *hand-mægen* 'hand-skill' [And 725b; GenA 247a]; *lif-cearo* 'life-sorrow' [And 1428b; GenA 878b]; *ræs-bora* 'counsellor' [And 139, 385a; GenA 1811a]; *wæg-þel* 'wave-board' [And 1711a; GenA 1358a, 1446a, 1496a];

leoðo-bend (*leoðu-*) 'limb-fetter' [*And* 100b, 164a, 1033b, 1373b, 1564b; *GenB* 382a];
ȳð-bord 'wave-plank' [*And* 298a; *GMen* 57b];
brand-hāt 'burning hot' [*And* 768b; *GuthB* 964b]; *dægrēd-wōma* 'crack of dawn' [*And* 125a; *GuthB* 1292a]; *ellen-heard* 'firm in courage' [*And* 1254a; *GuthB* 1165a]; *sār-benn* 'painful wound' [*And* 1239a; *GuthB* 1019a]; *sāwul-gedāl* 'soul-separation' [*And* 1701b; *GuthB* 1035a]; *wrōht-smið* 'accusation-maker' [*And* 86a; *GuthB* 905a];
cyne-rōf 'royally brave' [*And* 484a, 585a; *Jud* 200b, 311b]; *eald-genīðla* 'arch-enemy' [*And* 1048b, 1341b; *Jud* 228b]; *gār-gewinn* 'spear-strife' [*And* 958a; *Jud* 307a];
wæl-wulf 'slaughter-wolf' [*And* 149a; *Maldon* 96a];
hēah-ræced (*-reced*) 'lofty hall' [*And* 709a; *MCharm1* 31b];
ūp-engel 'heavenly angel' [*And* 226a; *Menologium* 210a];
cyle-gicel 'icicle' [*And* 1260a; *Phx* 59a]; *flōd-wylm* 'surging sea' [*And* 516b; *Phx* 64a* (*MS fold wyl mum*)]; *foddor-pegu* (*foddur-*) 'food-taking' [*And* 160b, 1101a; *Phx* 248a]; *wēa-tācen* 'sign of evil' [*And* 1119a; *Phx* 51b]; *weder-candel* (*-condel*) 'lamp of the sky' [*And* 372b; *Phx* 187a]; *will-gedryht* 'splendid company' [*And* 914b; *Phx* 342b]; *winter-geworp* 'snow-drift' [*And* 1256a; *Phx* 57a];
æl-fælo 'very harmful' [*And* 770a; *Ridd23* 9a]; *dæg-candel* 'day-lamp' [*And* 835b; *Ridd93* 32b]; *gūð-gewinn* 'battle-conflict' [*And* 217b; *Ridd05* 5b]; *hige-blīðe* 'joyful in heart' [*And* 1691a; *Ridd26* 20b]; *horn-sæl* 'gabled hall' [*And* 1158b; *Ridd03* 8b]; *hwæl-mere* 'whale-ocean' [*And* 370a; *Ridd02* 5a]; *mere-faroð* 'sea-current' [*And* 289, 351a; *Ridd60* 2a];
brim-hengest 'sea-stallion,' 'ship' [*And* 513b; *Rune* 47a, 66a];
lago-lād 'water-way' [*And* 314a; *Wand* 3a];
faroð-lācende 'sea-faring' [*And* 507b; *Whale* 5b, 20a, 80b]; *hēah-stefn* 'high-prowed' [*And* 266b; *Whale* 13]; *hlīn-duru* 'grate-door' [*And* 993a; *Whale* 78a].

(for a fuller list of some 89 uniquely shared parallels, see Powell 2002: 273–82)

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beorn beaduwe heard ēode in burh hraðe
ān-ræd oretta *elne* gefyrðred

- ### Andreas and the signed poems of Cynewulf: some parallels

[C1] *Jul* 11–12 fōron æfter burgum *swā* hē *biboden* hæfde
þegnas þrȳð-fulle oft hī þræce rærdon

Andy Orchard

- And* 1328–9 *Swā* ic nū *bebēode* bearnum mīnum
þegnum þrȝð-fullum ðæt hīe ðē hnægen
- [C2] *Jul* 148 þurh *gæst-gehygd* Iūliana
Jul 181 *ongyte glēawlice* *gæsta* scyppend
And 861 *ongitan glēawlice* *gæst-gehygdum*
- [C3] *Jul* 233–9 tō *carcerne* hyre *wæs cristes* lof
in *ferð-locan* *fæste biwunden*
milde mōd-sefan mægen unbrice
ðā wæs *mid* clustre *carcernes duru*
behliden homra geweorc hālig þær inne
wær-fæst wunade symle hēo *wuldor-cyning*
herede æt heortan *heofon-rīces* god
And 52–8 *herede in heortan* *heofon-rīces* weard
þeah ðe hē ātres drync atulne onfēnge
ēadig ond ðn-mōd hē mid elne forð
wyrðode wordum *wuldres* aldor
heofon-rīces weard hālgan stefne
of *carcerne* him *wæs Cristes* lof
on *fyrhð-locan* *fæste bewunden*
And 1075–7 syððan *mid* corðre *carcernes duru*
eorre æsc-berend opene fundon
onhliden *hamera geweorc* hyrdas dēade
- [C4] *Jul* 242–3 singāl gestð ðā *cwōm* semninga
in *þæt hlīn-ræced* *hæleða* gewinna
And 1462–3 on þære deorcan niht *þā cōm* dryhten god
in *þæt hlīn-ræced* *hæleða* wuldor
- [C5] *Jul* 245–6 glēaw gyren-stafa *gæst-geñiðla*
helle hæftling tō þære hālgan spræc
And 1341–2 ongan eft swā ær eald-*geñiðla*
helle hæftling hearm-lēoð galan
- [C6] *Jul* 268–9 *egsan geāclad* þe hyre se āglæca
wuldres wīper-breca *wordum* sægde
And 805–6 *egesan geāclod* þær þā æðelingas
wordum weorðodon *wuldres* aldor
El 57 *egsan geāclad* siððan el-þeodige
El 1128 *egesan geāclod* ond þære ār-wyrðan
- [C7] *Jul* 301 þurh *dēopne gedwolan* sægde hȝ dryas wæron
And 611 þurh *dēopne gedwolan* dēofles lārum
- [C8] *Jul* 310 þæt hē of *galgan* *his gæst onsende*
Jul 481–2 under rēone strēam sume ic *rōde bifealh*
þæt hī hyre drēorge on hēan *galgan*
And 1326–7 rīces berædde ond hine *rōde befealg*
þæt hē on *gealgan* *his gāst onsende*
El 480 on *galgan* *his* *gāst onsende*
- [C9] *Jul* 615 hēan *helle* gæst *hearm-lēoð āgōl*
Jul 629 gehyrde hēo *hearm galan* *helle* dēofol
And 1127 gehæfted for herige *hearm-lēoð galan*
And 1342 *helle hæftling* *hearm-lēoð galan*

The Originality of Andreas

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| [C10] | Jul 639
And 1664 | <i>folc of firenum</i> and him fröfre gehēt
<i>folc of firenum</i> is him fūs hyge |
| [C11] | El 54
El 550
And 1156 | hlēopon horn-boran <i>hrēopon friccan</i>
tō þām <i>here-meðle</i> <i>hrēopon friccan</i>
hlūd <i>heriges cyrm</i> <i>hrēopon friccan</i> |
| [C12] | El 140
And 1535 | <i>fram dæges orde</i> daroð-æsc flugon
<i>fram dæges orde</i> drync sōna gearu |
| [C13] | El 169–70

And 727–8

And 1298–9 | þā þā wīsestan <i>wordum cwædon</i>
<i>for þām here-mægene</i> þæt hit <i>heofon-cyninges</i>
þā gēn <i>worde cwæð</i> weoruda dryhten
<i>heofon-hālig gāst</i> <i>fore þām here-mægene</i>
<i>for þām here-mægene</i> helle dīoful
āwerged in wītum ond þæt <i>word gecwæð</i> |
| [C14] | El 219–20

And 203–4

And 211
Fates 34 | ædel-cyninges rōd Elene <i>ne wolde</i>
<i>þæs sīð-fates</i> <i>sæne weorðan</i>
ēalā Andrēas þæt <i>ðū ā woldest</i>
<i>þæs sīð-fætes</i> <i>sæne weorþan</i>
<i>ne meahst ðū þæs sīð-fætes</i> <i>sæne weorðan</i>
<i>sīðes sæne</i> ac ðurh sweordes bite |
| [C15] | El 244
And 223
And 513 | <i>brecan ofer bæð-weg</i> <i>brim-wudu snyrgan</i>
<i>brecan ofer bæð-weg</i> hafa blētsunge
<i>brecað ofer bæð-weg</i> <i>brim-hengestum</i> |
| [C16] | El 308–9

And 670–2 | æfst wið āre <i>inwit-þancum</i>
<i>wroht webbedan</i> ēow seo wergōu forðān
þurh <i>inwit-ðanc</i> ealdor-sācerd
herme hyspan hord-locan onspēon
<i>wroht webbade</i> hē on gewitte oncnēow |
| [C17] | El 322
And 1008 | <i>gehðum geðmre</i> georne sōhton
<i>geohðum geðmor</i> in þām gnorn-hofe |
| [C18] | El 398
And 752 | þā on <i>fyrn-dagum</i> <i>fæderas cūðon</i>
ðone on <i>fyrn-dagum</i> <i>fæderas cūðon</i> |
| [C19] | El 611–13

And 1157–9

El 698
And 39 | hū mæg þām geweorðan þe on <i>wēstenne</i>
<i>mēðe</i> ond <i>metelēas</i> mōr-land trydeð
<i>hungre gehæfted</i> ond him hlāf ond stān
māndon <i>mete-lēaste</i> <i>mēðe</i> stōdon
<i>hungre gehæfte</i> horn-salu wunedon
<i>wēste</i> wīn-ræced welan ne benohton
<i>mēðe</i> ond <i>metelēas</i> mægen wæs geswīðrod
<i>for mete-lēaste</i> <i>mēðe</i> gedrehte |
| [C20] | El 1040
And 1688 | <i>dēoful-gildum</i> ond <i>gedwolan fylde</i>
<i>dēoful-gild</i> tōdrāf ond <i>gedwolan fylde</i> |
| [C21] | El 1089
And 887
And 1572
Jul 641 | on <i>wuldres wyn</i> bīde <i>wigena þrym</i>
þær wæs <i>wuldres wynn</i> <i>wigendra þrym</i>
<i>wigendra þrym</i> wæter fæðmedon
gemunað <i>wigena wyn</i> ond <i>wuldres þrym</i> |

Andy Orchard

- [C22] *ChristB* 481–9 *farað nū geond ealne* yrmenne grund
 geond wīd-wegas weoredum cȳðað
 bodiað ond brēmað **beorhtne gelēafan**
 ond fulwiað folc under roderum
 hweorfað to <hæþnum> hergas brēotaþ [MS
 heofonum]
 fyllað ond fēogað fēondscype dwæscað
 sibbe sāwað on sefan manna
 þurh meahtha spēd *ic ēow* mid wunige
 forð on frōfre ond *ēow friðe healde*
- And* 332–6 *farað nū geond ealle* eorðan scēatas
 emne swā wīde swā wæter bebūgeð
 oððe stede-wangas stræte gelicgaþ
 bodiað æfter burgum **beorhtne gelēafan**
 ofer foldan fæðm *ic ēow freoðo healde*
- [C23] *ChristB* 509 *wordum wrætlicum* ofer *wera mengu*
 And 630 *wordum wrætlicum* ond þe wyrda gehwære
 And 1200 *wordum wrætlicum* for *wera menigo*
- [C24] *ChristB* 687 *cýning al-wiht*a *cræftum* weorðað
 And 1603 *cýning eall-wiht*a *cræftum* wealdeð
- [C25] *ChristB* 744 þus hēr on *grundum* *godes ēce bearn*
 And 747 *godes ēce bearn* þone þe *grund* ond *sund*
- [C26] *And* 1291 þū eart *gescyldend* *wið sceaðan wæpnum*
 ChristB 775 þæt hē ūs *gescilde* *wið sceapan wæpnum*
- [C27] *Fates* 10 *þær hīe dryhtnes æ* *dēman sceoldon*
 And 1194 *ðā ðe dryhtnes ā* *dēman cūðon*
 And 1403 *þær ic dryhtnes æ* *dēman sceolde*
- [C28] *Fates* 21 syþþan *hilde*-heard *heriges byrhtme*
 And 1202 ahlēopon *hild*-frome *heriges brehtme*
 El 205 hwær āhangen wæs *heriges beorhtme*
- [C29] *Fates* 31 *lēode lārde* þanon *līfes weg*
 And 170 *lēode lārde* on *līfes weg*
 And 1680 *lārde* þā þā *lēode* on *gelēafan weg*
- [C30] *Fates* 32 *sīðe gesōhte* *swegele drēamas*
 And 641 *sōhton sīð*-frome *swegles drēamas*
 And 809 *sēcan* mid sybbe *swegles drēamas*

Andreas and the Guthlac-poems: some parallels

[parallels shared with other poems are signalled by a dagger]

- [G1] *GuthA* 5 grēteð gæst oþerne *ābōodeð* him *godes ærende*
 GuthA 162 *godes ærendu* þā him gæst onwrah
 GuthA 724–5 siþþan Bartholomēus *āboden* hæfde
 godes ærendu gearwe stōdun
 And 776 grēne grundas *godes ærendu*

The Originality of Andreas

- [G2†] *GuthA* 8–9 *wegas þē sindon wēþe ond wuldres lēoht*
 torht ontȳned eart nū tīd-fara
 GuthA 487–8 *gesēon meahte wæs mē swegles lēoht*
 torht ontȳned þēah ic torn druge
 And 1611–12 *wītu bē gewyrhtum ēow is wuldres lēoht*
 torht ontȳned gif gē teala hycgað
 XSt 555–6 *ūs is wuldres lēoht*
 torht ontȳned þām ðe teala þenceð
 XSt 592–3 *wunað in wynnum þæt is wuldres blēd*
 torht ontȳned uton <teala> hycgan [teala not in MS]
- [G3†] *GuthA* 48 *þæt hē ūs fæggran gefēan bringe*
 GuthB 1181 *tō þām fæggran gefēan forð-sið mīnne*
 And 598 *tō þām fægeran gefēan þær frēo mōton*
 And 1693 *tō fægeran gefēan þær næfre fēondes ne bið*
 El 948 *þone fæggran gefēan ond on fyr-bæðe*
- [G4†] *GuthA* 66 *ðā þe him tō heofonum hyge stapeliað*
 GuthB 1110 *mēðe for ðæm miclan bysgum ongon þā his mōd*
 And 82 *stapelian*
 Jul 222 *middan-geardes weard mōd stapolige*
 mōd stapelige se ofer mægna gehwylc
- [G5] *GuthA* 92 *se næfre þā lēan ālegeð þām þe his lufan ādrēogeð*
 And 164 *belocen lēoðu-bendum þe <oft> his lufan ādræg*
 [MS of]
- [G6] *GuthA* 116 *engel dryhtnes ond se atela gæst*
 And 1296 *ðā ðær ætywde se atola gāst*
- [G7] *GuthA* 145–6 *wīde wāðe wuldre byscyrede*
 lyft-lācende wæs sēo londes stōw
 GuthA 673 *ne þurfun gē wēnan wuldre biscyrede*
 And 827 *þurh lyft-gelāc on land becwōm*
 And 1618 *in wīta forwyrd wuldre bescyrede*
- [G8] *GuthA* 158–9 *elne geēode þā hē āna gesæt*
 dȳgle stōwe ðær hē dryhtnes lof
 And 1006–7 *secgan dryhtne lof dōm-weorðinga*
 engla ðeodne hē ðær āna sæt
- [G9] *GuthA* 176 *ēadig ðretta ond-wīges heard*
 And 463 *ēadig ðreta eorlas trymede*
 And 879 *ēadig ðretta Essāges sunu*
- [G10] *GuthA* 229 *āhofun hearm-stafas hleahtor alegdon*
 And 561 *āhof hearm-cwide hæleð unsælige*
- [G11] *GuthA* 238 *þā þe for his life lȳt sorgedon*
 And 1227 *lēoda duguðe lȳt sorgodon*
- [G12†] *GuthA* 248 *in godcundum gæst-gerȳnum*
 GuthB 1084 *þam ic georne gæst-gerȳnum*
 GuthB 1113 *gæst-gerȳnum in godes temple*
 And 858 *geonge gēn-cwidum gāst-gerȳnum*
 El 189 *ðus glēawlice gāst-gerȳnum*

- El 1147 ongan þa *geornlice* *gāst-gerȳnum*
 ChristB 440 nū ðū *geornlice* *gāst-gerȳnum*
 ChristB 713 giedda gearo-snottor *gāst-gerȳnum*
- [G13+] GuthA 335 *onbryrdeð brēost-sefa* blīðe gæste
 GuthA 654 *brēostum inbryrdeð* tō þām betran hām
 And 1118 *brēostum onbryrdeð* tō þām beadu-lāce
 El 841 *inbryrdeð brēost-sefa* syððan bēacen geseh
 El 1045 *inbryrdeð brēost-sefa* on þæt *betere* lif
 El 1094 *brēostum onbryrdeð* biseop þæs folces
 Phx 126 *onbryrdeð brēost-sefa* blissum hrēmig
 Phx 550 *brēostum onbryrdeð* beald reordade
- [G14] GuthA 404 hē hine *scilde* wið <*sceðþendra*> [MS *sceð þendra*]
 And 1047 þē lās him *scyld-hatan* *scyððan* cōmon
 And 1147 þȳ lās *scyld-hatan* <*sceððan*> mihton [MS *sceaðan*]
- [G15] GuthA 406–7 *wæron hȳ rēowe* tō *rāsanne*
 gīfrum grāpum nō *god* wolde
 And 1334–5 *hīe wæron rēowe* *rāsdon* on sōna
 gīfrum grāpum hine *god* forstōð
- [G16] GuthA 425 *wītum wælan* ne him wiht gescōð
 And 1361 *wītum bewæled* ond þæt word gecwæð
- [G17] GuthA 513 *swā hlēoprade* *hālig cempa*
 And 461 *swā hlēoðrode* *hālig cempa*
 And 537–8 þā *hlēoðrade* *hālgan* stefne
 compa colleen-ferhð cyning wyrðude
- [G18+] GuthA 515–6 *synnum āsundrad* *sceolde hē sāres* þā gēn
 dæl *ādrēogan* ðēah þe dryhten his
 āsundrad fram synnum þēah hē sāres swā feala
 dēopum dolg-slegum *drēogan sceolde*
 āsundrod fram synnum swā smāte gold
 synnum āsundrad sumes onlice
 āsyndrod fram synnum swā ðīn sunu mære
- [G19] GuthA 523 on *bonena hond* āhte bēga geweald
 And 17 blādes brūcan oft him *bonena hand*
- [G20] GuthA 531–2 mægne *gemeted* *micel is tō secgan*
 eall æfter orde þæt hē on *elne ādrēag*:
 And 1481–6 ofer mīn *gemet* *mycel is tō secganne*
 langsum leornung þæt hē in life *ādrēag*
 eall æfter orde þæt scell æ-glæwra
 mann on moldan þonne ic mē tælige
 findan on ferðe þæt fram fruman cunne
 eall þā earfeðo þe hē mid *elne ādrēah*
- [G21] GuthA 593–4 *lifes lēoht-fruma* lyfan wyll
 weoruda waldend þæt gē his wēr-gengan
 And 387–8 *lifes lēoht-fruma* lēan forgilde
 weoruda waldend ond þe wist gife
- [G22] GuthA 611 *herge in heortan* *heofon-rīces weard*
 And 52 *herede in heortan* *heofon-rīces weard*

The Originality of Andreas

- | | | |
|--------|--------------|---|
| [G23] | GuthA 619–20 | <p>willle weorþian wordum ond dædum
 <i>lufian in life</i> swā is lār ond ār
 And 596–7
 hū ūs wuldres weard wordum ond dædum
 <i>lufode in life</i> ond þurh lāre spēon</p> |
| [G24] | GuthA 637–41 | <p>ond ic þæt gelyfe in lif-fruman
 ēcne onwealdan ealra gesceafta
 þæt hē mec for miltsum ond mægen-spēdum
 niðða nergend nāfre wille
 þurh ellen-weorc anforlætan
 And 1284–7
 ic gelyfe tō ðe mīn lif-fruma
 þæt ðū mild-heort mē for þīnum mægen-spēdum
 nerigend fira nāfre <wille> [MS corr. from <i>welle</i>]
 ēce æl-mihtig anforlætan</p> |
| [G25] | GuthA 663 | <p>wēndun gē ond <woldun> wiperhycgende
 [MS <i>woldum</i>]
 And 1072
 wēndan ond woldon wiðerhycgende</p> |
| [G26] | GuthA 692 | <p>ācol for ðām egsan ofer-mæcga spræc
 And 1266
 ācol for þy egesan þæs þe hē ær ongann</p> |
| [G27] | GuthA 698–9 | <p>nē sý him bānes bryce nē blōdig wund
 <i>lices læla nē lāpes wiht</i>
 And 1442–3
 þurh bān-gebrec blōdige stige
 <lices> lælan nō þe lādes mā [MS <i>lic</i>]
 And 1473–4
 nē bān gebrocen nē blōdig wund
 <lice> gelenge nē lādes dæl [MS <i>licge</i>]</p> |
| [G28] | GuthA 722 | <p>ðā wæs Gūðlāces gæst geblissad
 And 468
 æfter gryre-hwīle gäst geblissod</p> |
| [G29†] | GuthA 742 | <p>smolt wæs se sige-wong ond sele nīwe
 And 1581
 smeolt wæs se sige-wang symble wæs dryge
 Phx 31
 smylte is se sige-wong sun-bearo līxēð</p> |
| [G30] | GuthA 745 | <p>ēadig ond on-mōð eardes brūcan
 And 54
 ēadig ond on-mōð hē mid elne forð</p> |
| [G31†] | GuthA 783 | <p>fore onsýne ēces dēman</p> |
| | GuthB 1188 | <p>fore onsýne ēces dēman</p> |
| | And 721 | <p>fore onsýne ēcan dryhtnes</p> |
| | El 745 | <p>fore onsýne ēces dēman</p> |
| | ChristB 796 | <p>fore onsýne ēces dēman</p> |
| | ChristB 836 | <p>fore onsýne ēces dēman</p> |
| | Phx 600 | <p>fore onsýne ēcan dryhtnes</p> |
| [G32†] | GuthB 829 | <p>nē lifes lyre nē lices hryre</p> |
| | GuthB 1093 | <p>æfter lices hryre lēan unhwīlen</p> |
| | And 229 | <p>æfter lices hryre lifes brūcan</p> |
| | Phx 645 | <p>æfter lices hryre lif eft onfēng</p> |
| [G33†] | GuthB 891 | <p>helpe ond hælo nænig hæleþa is
 þe āreccan mæge oppe rīm wite
 And 544–6
 miltsum gemærsod nænig manna is
 under heofon-hwealfe hæleða cynnes</p> |

Andy Orchard

- El 635
Panth 2–3
ðætte āreccan mæg oððe rīm wite
ic *ne mæg āreccan* nū ic þæt *rīm* ne can
unrīmu cynn þe wē æpelu *nē magon*
ryhte *āreccan nē rīm witan*
- [G34] GuthB 903
And 167
wiðstōd stronglice næs sēo stund latu
wiðstōd stranglice þā sīo stefn gewearð
- [G35] GuthB 903
GuthB 1265
And 1210
wiðstōd stronglice næs sēo stund latu
nis sēo tīd latu tȳdrað þis bān-fæt
staðola wið *strangum nis sēo stund latu*
- [G36] GuthB 905
And 86
þæt þā *wrōht-smiðas* wōp āhōfun
wērigum *wrōht-smiðum* on þone wyrrestan
- [G37] GuthB 908
And 138
cirmdon on corðre hwīlum cyrdon eft
cirmdon cald-heorte *corðor* oðrum getang
- [G38+] GuthB 938
GuthB 1088
And 1144
El 1086
ChristB 760
ChristB 789
ChristB 866
Jul 263
hālig of hēahþu hreþer innan born
hālig on hēahþu þær mīn hyht myneð
hālig of hēhðo hæðenum folce
hālig of hīehða nū ðū hrædlīce
hālig of hēahðu hider onsendeð
hālig of hēahþu hūru ic wēne mē
hālge on hēahþu þā hē heofonum āstāg
hālig of hēahþu þe sind heardlicu
- [G39+] GuthB 938
GuthB 979–80

GuthB 1052
And 1018–19

ChristB 539–40

Beo 2113
hālig of hēahþu hreþer innan born
hāt ond heoro-grim *hreþer innan wēol*
born bān-locas brypen wæs ongunnen
hefige *æt heortan hreþer innan* swearc
hālig ond heofon-torht *hreðor innan* wæs
wynnum āwelled þā worde āgan
hāt æt heortan hreðer innan wēoll
beorn brēost-sefa bidon ealle þær
hilde-strengo *hreðer inne wēoll*
- [G40] GuthB 952
And 626
dēor-mōd on dēgle dōm-ēadig bād
dēor-mōd on dīgle ðā mid dryhten oft
- [G41] GuthB 953
And 233
heard ond hyge-rōf hyht wæs genīwad
heard ond hīge-rōf nalas hild-lata
- [G42+] GuthB 986
And 296
Jul 529
grimme onguldon *gaful-rædenne*
gaful-rædenne āgīfen habbað
āgīefan gnorn-cearig *gaful-rædenne*
- [G43] GuthB 1011
And 307
hū gewearð þē þus *wīne*-dryhten mīn
hū gewearð þē þæs *wīne* lēofesta
- [G44+] GuthB 1025
And 602
Phx 550
bittor bān-coþa *beald reordade*
beorn ofer bolcan *beald reordade*
brēostum onbryrdeð *beald reordade*
- [G45] GuthB 1035–6

And 931
sāwel-gedāles þonne *seofon niht*
first-gemearces þæt mīn feorh heonan
þing gehēgan þrēora *nihta*
fyrst-gemearces swā ic þē fēran hēt

The Originality of Andreas

- [G46] *GuthB* 1062 glæd-mōd gode lēof geongran rētan
And 1579 glēaw-mōd gode lēof him <wæs> gearu sōna [*wæs*
 not in MS]
- [G47] *GuthB* 1071 fācnes frum-bearn fyrene gestælan
And 1294 fācnes frum-bearn þurh fēondes cræft
- [G48] *GuthB* 1077 ne bēo þū on sefan tō sēoc ic ēom sīpes fūs
And 98 under swegle ne bēo ðū on sefan tō forht
- [G49†] *GuthB* 1080 gesēon sigora frēan mīn þæt swāse bearn
And 714 gesēh sigora frēa on seles wāge
Phx 675 gesēon sigora frēan sine fine
- [G50] *GuthB* 1088–9 hālig on hēahþu þær mīn hyht myneð
 tō gesēcenne sāwul fundað
And 294–5 efne to þām lande þær þe lust myneð
 tō gesēcenne syððan gē ēowre
- [G51†] *GuthB* 1106 on þone beorhtan dæg blissum hrēmig
And 1699 blissum hrēmig wolde on brim-þisan
El 1137 blissum hrēmig þe hire brungen wæs
Phx 126 onbryrded brēost-sefa blissum hrēmig
- [G52] *GuthB* 1117 wundrum to wuldre in þā wlitigan gesceaft
And 1437 þæt ðæt geweorðeð þæt ðeos wlitige gesceaft
- [G53†] *GuthB* 1131 word ond wīsdōm ond þæs weres stihung
And 569 word ond wīsdōm āh hē þara wundra ā
And 650 word ond wīsdōm on wera gemōte
And 1678 word ond wīsdōm syððan wuldres þegn
El 334 word ond wīsdōm hwæt gē witgena
- [G54†] *GuthB* 1132–3 mōd ond mægen-cræft þe him meotud engla
 gæsta gēocend forgiefen hæfde
And 548 gæsta gēocend þīne gife dælest
And 900–1 ðēh ic on yð-fare engla þeoden
 gæsta gēocend ongitan ne cūðe
El 682 gæsta gēocend hire ludas oncwæð
El 1076 gæsta gēocend godes āgen bearn
ChristA 198 gæsta gēocend þæt ic gēn ne conn
- [G55] *GuthB* 1135 dagas on rīme þæs se dryhtnes <þegn> [*þegn* not
 in MS]
And 1696 dagas on rīme swā him dryhten bebēad
- [G56] *GuthB* 1165 eorl ellen-heard oreþe gebredan
And 1254 eorl ellen-heard ondlange niht
- [G57] *GuthB* 1197 ðā wearð mōd-geþanc miclum gebisgad
And 395 mōðigra mægen myclum gebysgod
- [G58] *GuthB* 1254 siþþan hē mē fore ēagum onsýne wearð
And 910 ðā him fore ēagum onsýne <wearð> [*MS werð*]
- [G59] *GuthB* 1288 scān scīr-wered scadu sweþredon
And 836 scīre scīnan sceadu sweðerodon
- [G60†] *GuthB* 1292 ofer dēop gelād dægred-wōma
And 190 hū mæg ic dryhten mīn ofer dēop gelād

Andy Orchard

- ChristB* 856 *ofer dēop gelād* wæs se drohtað strong
- [G61] *GuthB* 1291–2 from æfen-glōme oþþæt ēastan *cwōm*
 ofer dēop gelād *dægred- wōma*
And 124–5 lungre lēorde leoht æfter *cōm*
 dægred-wōma duguð samnade
- [G62] *GuthB* 1294 ēadig *elnes gemyndig* spræc tō his onbeht-þegne
 And 1001 ond þær inēode *elnes gemyndig*
 And 1263 eorl unforcūð *elnes gemyndig*
- [G63+] *GuthB* 1313 *gesewen under swegle* *sunnan* beorhtra
 And 1009–13 *geseh þā under swegle* swæsne gefēran
 hālig hāligne hyht wæs genīwad
 ārās þā togēnes gode þancade
 þæs ðe hīe onsunde æfre moston
 gesēon under sunnan syb wæs gemæne
 El 75 *gesēge under swegle* hē of slæpe onbrægd
 ChristB 502 *gesēon under swegle* song āhofun
- [G64] *GuthB* 1335 *grond wið grēote* gnorn-sorge wæg
 And 425 *grund wið grēote* god ēaðe mæg
- [G65+] *GuthB* 1339–41 wiste wine lēofne him þæs *wōpes hring*
 torne gemonade teagor *ȝðum wēol*
 hāte hlēor-dropan ond on hreþre wæg
 And 1275–8 swungen sār-slegum swāt *ȝðum wēoll*
 þurh bān-cofan blōd lifrum swealg
 hātan heolfre hrā weorces ne sann
 wundum wērig þā cwōm *wōpes hring*
 El 1131 wīfes *willan* þā wæs *wōpes hring*
 ChristB 537 hyra *wil-gifan* þær wæs *wōpes hring*
- [G66+] *GuthB* 1373 weorca wuldor-lēan *willum nēotan*
 And 809–10 sēcan mid sybbe swegles *drēamas*
 ChristC 1342–3 ond þæs tō wīdan feore *willum nēotan*
 on ēþel faran engla *drēames*
 ond þæs tō wīdan feore *willum nēotan*

Andreas and Judith: some parallels

[parallels shared with other poems are signalled by a dagger]

- [J1] *Jud* 61 *dryhten dugeða waldend* gewāt ðā se dēofulcunda
 And 248 þæt wæs *drihten sylf* *dugeða wealdend*
- [J2+] *Jud* 271 ond gristbitian *gode orfeorme*
 And 406 geōmor-mōde *gode orfeorme*
 And 1617 ðæt þā *gastas* *gode orfeorme*
 Vgl 49 grund-fūsne *gæst* *gode orfeormne*
- [J3] *Jud* 90 gehēawan þysne *morðres bryttan* geunne mē mīnra
 gesynta
 And 1170 ongan þā meldigan *morpres brytta*
- [J4] *Jud* 115 wyrnum bewunden *wītum gebunden*
 And 580 wērige wan-hāle *wītum gebundene*

The Originality of Andreas

- [J5] *Jud* 155–6 *cýninga wuldor* þæt *gecȝðed* wearð
 geond woruld wīde þæt ēow ys *wuldor*-blæd
 And 575–6 *gumena lēofost* hū hē his gif *cȝðde*
 geond woruld wīde wealdendes bearn
- [J6] *Jud* 165 onġean ða <*þeodnes*> mægð *þūsend-mælum* [MS
 þeodnes]
 And 872 þegnas ymb *þeoden* *þūsend-mælum*
- [J7] *Jud* 163 *weas wīf somod* wornum ond hēapum
 And 1666 *weas wīf samod* hira wōþ becōm
- [J8] *Jud* 247 slege-fæge hæleð *slæpe tōbrēdon*
 And 1527 æfter symbel-dæge *slæpe tōbrugdon*
 GenA 2666 sinces gesundne þā *slæpe tōbrægd*
- [J9] *Jud* 298 swēot Ēbrea *sigore geweorðod*
 And 116 sorgum geswenced *sigore gewyrðod*
- [J10] *Jud* 332 *cēne under cumblum* <on> comp-wīge [MS &]
 And 1204 *cēne under cumblum* corðre mycle
- [J11] *Jud* 347 *wuldor tō wīdan aldre* þe gesceōp wind ond lyfte
 And 938 geweorðað *wuldor*-gifum *tō wīdan aldre*
 And 1721 wlitige on *wuldre* *tō wīdan ealdre*
- [J12] *Jud* 349 ond *swegles drēamas* ðurh his sylfes miltse
 And 641 *sōhton sīð*-frome *swegles drēamas*
 And 809 *sēcan* mid sybbe *swegles drēamas*
 Fates 32 *sīðe gesōhte* *swegle drēamas*

Andreas and The Phoenix: some parallels

[parallels shared with other poems are signalled by a dagger: see too G13, 18, 29, 31, 32, 44, 49, and 51 above]

- [P1] *Phx* 41 worulde geweorðe swā iū *wætres þrym*
 And 1260 cealdum cyle-gicelum clang *wætres þrym*
 And 1536 wēox *wætres þrym* weas cwānedon
- [P2] *Phx* 59 *caldum cyle-gicelum* cnysed ænigne
 And 1260 *cealdum cyle-gicelum* clang wætres þrym
- [P3] *Phx* 84 *frōd fyrm-geweorc* sē hit on frymþe gescōp
 And 737 *frōd fyrm-geweorc* þæt hē on foldan stōd
- [P4] *Phx* 117–18 woruld *gewlitedag* sibban *wuldres gim*
 ofer geofones gong grund *gescīneþ*
 Phx 183 hluttur *heofones gim* *hālig scīneð*
 Phx 515–16 of his hēah-setle *hālgum scīneð*
 wlitig wuldres gim wēl biþ þām þe mōt
 And 1268 weorðade wordum oððæt *wuldres gim*
 And 1720–1 in *heofon*-þrymme *hālgum scīneð*
 wlitige on wuldre *tō wīdan ealdre*

Andy Orchard

- | | | |
|--------|---|---|
| [P5] | Phx 123
Phx 340
And 864–6 | <i>fareð feþrum snell flyhte on lyfte</i>
<i>flyhte on lyfte</i> fenix biþ on middum
<i><faran> on flyhte feðerum</i> hrēmige [<i>faran</i> not in MS]
ūs ofslæpendum sǣwle ábrugdon
mid gefēan feredon <i>flyhte on lyfte</i> |
| [P6] | Phx 164–5
And 871–2 | <i>ūtan ymbe æþelne</i> æghwylc wille
wesan <i>þegn</i> ond þēow <i>þēodne</i> mærum
<i>ūtan ymbe æðelne</i> englas stōdon
<i>þegnas</i> ymb <i>þeoden</i> þūsend-mælum |
| [P7] | Phx 221
And 1182 | <i>fæges feorh-hord</i> þonne flǣsc ond bān
<i>fæges feorh-hord</i> gāð fromlice |
| [P8] | Phx 237
And 635 | <i>wriðað</i> on <i>wynnum</i> þæt hē bið wæstmum
<i>wynnum wriðað</i> þurh þīne word-læðe |
| [P9] | Phx 336
And 126 | on healfa <gehwōne> <i>hēapum þringað</i> [MS <i>gehwore</i>]
hæðne hild-frecan <i>hēapum þrungon</i> |
| [P10] | Phx 369
And 1368 | <i>sāre swylt-cwale</i> þe him symle wāt
<i>sāre swylt-cwale</i> secgas mīne |
| [P11] | Phx 445–6
And 5–6 | dædum dōmlicum þæt <i>him dryhten</i> wearð
<i>heofona hēah-cyning</i> hold on mōde
syððan hīe gedældon swā <i>him dryhten</i> sylf
<i>heofona hēah-cyning</i> <hlyt> getæhte [MS <i>lyt</i>] |
| [P12] | Phx 389
And 335 | bēacnað in <i>burgum</i> hū hī <i>beorhtne</i> gefēan
bodiað æfter <i>burgum</i> <i>beorhtne</i> gelēafan |
| [P13+] | Phx 465
And 62
And 1282
El 814 | <i>weoruda wil-giefa</i> þis þā wyrta sind
<i>weoruda wil-geofan</i> ond þus wordum cwæð
<i>weoruda will-geofa</i> þu wæst ond const
<i>weoroda will-gifa</i> nū ic wāt þæt ðū eart |
| [P14] | Phx 522
And 1550 | <i>egeslic æled</i> þonne ānra gehwylc
<i>egeslic æled</i> ēag-sýne wearð |

Andreas *and* The Whale: some parallels

[parallels shared with other poems are signalled by a dagger]

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|--|
| [W1] | Whale 5
Whale 20–1 | frēcne ond ferð-grim <i>fareð-lācendum</i>
þonne gewīcīað wērig-ferðe
<i>farōð-lācende</i> frēcnes ne wēnað
þon mā þe þā fiscas <i>farāð-lācende</i>
hafast þe on <i>fyrhðe</i> <i>farōð-lācende</i> |
| [W2+] | Whale 23
And 592 | <i>rēonig-mōde</i> <i>ræste</i> geliste
< <i>rēonig-mōde</i> > <i>reste</i> gefēgon
[MS <i>reomig mode</i>] |
| | GuthB 1095 | wæs him <i>ræste</i> nēod <i>rēonig-mōdum</i> |
| [W3] | Whale 31
And 512 | <i>scipu</i> mid <i>scealcum</i> swā bið scinna þeaw
<i>scipum</i> under <i>scealcum</i> þonne sceor cymeð |

The Economy of *Beowulf*

Rory Naismith

The world of *Beowulf* is one which glitters and shines with treasure. At too many points to list here, the poet dwells over the intricacies of swords, neck-rings, helmets, and other objects. Such passages contribute to the poem's famously rich texture, and fine objects also fulfill a powerful role in the society imagined by the *Beowulf* poet. It is not enough for the characters in the poem to have a weapon or a reward: the poet spins out the details of the items, moving beyond their appearance and quality to their significance for the human actors in the poem. Tellingly, the wide range of forty or so words used to describe treasure includes some (such as *gestrēon* and *frætwe*) which also touch etymologically and semantically on reproduction and life-forces (Taylor 1986).¹ Rich objects become invested with a value that runs deeper than their considerable material worth. In themselves, they are frequently tools of war and feasting – central activities of elite life, at least as portrayed in the poem – but also serve as physical embodiments of memory and honor: they recall occasions of giving and the fates of previous owners, for the benefit of both the current holder and those around them. Making a gift of treasure was more than simply a reward for good service; it built the personal bonds and shared memories which were supposed to hold society together (Bazelmans 1999 and 2000; Hill 1982 and 1996; Thieme 1996; cf. Bjork 1994). Thus Unferth shows his recognition of Beowulf's capabilities with a gift of his own sword, Hrunting (cf. Baker 2013, 77–102), while the watchman who protects Beowulf's ship on the Danish coast receives a gold-bound sword for his efforts, *þæt hē syðþan wæs on meodubence mǣpme þȳ weorþra, yrfelāfe* (1901b–4a: “so that after that on the mead-bench he was the worthier for that precious thing, that rich legacy”).²

All use, abuse, or abandonment of such treasure speaks to its ability to shape human motivations and interactions. This social significance

¹ Elizabeth Tyler (2006a, 25–100) has also analyzed the significance and collocations of some of the principal words for treasure. Terms for exchange in Old English poetry more widely have been explored in Surber-Meyer 1994.

² All quotations from *Beowulf* are from Fulk, Bjork and Niles 2008; translations are from Fulk 2010. Quotations from other Old English poems are from ASPR.

of treasure in *Beowulf* is well known (Leisi 1953; Cherniss 1972, esp. ch. 4; Greenfield 1974; Silber 1977; Creed 1989; Tarzia 1989; Surber-Meyer 1994; Van Meter 1996).³ But as with so much in *Beowulf*, the strong sentiments evoked by treasure could cut both ways. Precious items loaded with history could bring disorder and violence as well as fame and friendship. Theft from the dragon's treasure famously opens the last, fatal act of the poem, and the complex history and significance of this cursed assemblage has been explored many times (Grinsell 1967; Cherniss 1968; Conder 1973; Anderson 1977; Helder 1977; Bliss 1979; Taylor 1997), while Heremod's failure to distribute treasure to his warriors was part of his undoing (1716–22a) (Orchard 2003: 110–13; Vickrey 1974). But probably the most explicit instance of treasure inciting anger and bloody revenge comes as Beowulf relays to Hygelac his suspicions concerning the planned marriage alliance between Danes and Heathobards. He paints a vivid imaginary scene of a man at the wedding on whom *gladiað gomelra lāfe, heard ond hringmæl Heaðabeardna gestreōn þenden hīe ðām wæpnum wealdan mōston* (2036–8: “gleam the heirlooms of the elders, the hard and ring-patterned treasures that belonged to the Heatho-Bards for as long as they had the power to wield those weapons”). The Dane's trophy is a disgrace to his hosts, sons of the former Heathobard owners, and an old warrior among them provokes the young men to retaliation by drawing attention to the sword: *meaht ðū, mīn wine, mēce gecnāwan þone þīn fæder tō gefeohte bær under heregrīman hindeman sīðe ... nū hēr þāra banena byre nāthwylces frætsum hrēmig on flet gæð, morðres gylpeð, ond þone mādþum byreð þone þe ðū mid rihte rædan sceoldest* (2047–56: “can you, my friend, recognize the sword that your father carried to battle under masked helmet for the final time, precious iron ... now the son of one or another of the killers is walking here on this floor, priding himself on the gear, boasts of the murder and bears the valuables that you by right should possess”). In this case, the sword serves as a catalyst for renewed conflict, precisely because of its eventful history.

These points about the prominence and meaning of treasure in *Beowulf* are well known; so too is the complicated nexus between *Beowulf* and material culture forged in three centuries of critical literature (major contributions include Cramp 1957; Frank 1992; Hills 1996; Webster 1998; Hines 2008). The principal purpose of this chapter is to pursue a further dimension of the material context of the poem, on the basis of historical as well as literary and artefactual evidence. As befits a volume of essays in honour of a scholar whose mastery of Old English language and literature extends to thorough appreciation

³ There are other critical approaches to treasure in *Beowulf*, not least its religious significance in discussion of pagan and Christian morals: Crook 1974; Marshall 2010.

of the contribution made by coin inscriptions,⁴ the focus here is what I have termed the ‘economy’ of *Beowulf*: the poem’s representation of wealth and acts of exchange, and the relationship of these to economic processes in Anglo-Saxon elite society.

One might well first ask how much of an economy is apparent in *Beowulf*. The poem begins and ends with gifts of the most final variety: treasures heaped for disposal with the dead in a funerary ship and a burial mound (cf. Owen-Crocker 2000). Between them are many other gifts, rich in meaning as well as bulk; so many, in fact, that ceremonial gift-giving leaves little room for much else. Gift exchange of this form is much more about the operation of society than economy (cf. Hénaff 2010: 107–55). Hence, although *Beowulf* is deeply concerned with people, their dealings with one another and indeed with valuable material goods, the text is woefully vague on what the average reader in modern society would consider economic affairs. At no point is there any buying or selling, or (probably) any use of monetary units.⁵ The closest one gets (at least in direct terms) is the payment of compensation with money (*feoh*) for a death; this the poet refers to twice (459–72 and 1050–5), with a further comment that Grendel was not minded to adhere to the norms of *wergild*-payment in avoidance of conflict (154–6) (Frotscher 2013: 759).

It is tempting to ascribe these features simply to the kind of society in which the *Beowulf* poet was interested: a rich elite of courtly and martial tastes (Wormald 2006: 30–105), reflecting early medieval economic systems only loosely. As Peter Baker has recently put it, gift-giving in *Beowulf* “is really a narrow slice of an economic system, presented ... as if it were the whole” (Baker 2013: 54). The poet seemingly had little interest in how the food and drink consumed at Heorot was acquired, or what other commerce the *sæliþende* (377b: ‘seafarers’) mentioned by Hrothgar as bearing the *gifsceattas* (378a: ‘gifts’) of the Geats may have engaged in (cf. Baker 2013: 37–8). The poem’s image of a society dominated by gifts (along with other social manifestations of reciprocity such as marriages and violent tit-for-tat vengeance)

⁴ At numerous points in R.D. Fulk’s major volume on the history of Old English meter (Fulk 1992), names of moneyers and rulers inscribed on coins contribute to establishing a chronology of linguistic developments.

⁵ One possible exception is *sceattas* (1686b), along with the compound *gifsceattas* (378a). Both occur in the context of tributes paid by one people to another. Since about 1800 *sceat* has come to be associated with early Anglo-Saxon silver coins (Naismith 2015), though its first occurrence in the laws of Æthelberht I of Kent (d. 616/17) is as a twentieth of the *scilling*, itself probably referring to the gold coins which were the only known currency of the time. *Sceat* therefore probably meant either a minute weight of gold (Grierson 1961) or possibly its equivalent in silver bullion (Hines 2010 and 2014), and in any case it could also have served as a unit of account. Importantly, it could furthermore refer to ‘wealth’ or ‘goods’ in a more general way (see Bosworth and Toller 1972): this is the most likely intended meaning in the context of *Beowulf*, where other non-specific references to treasure abound.

finds more parallels in the ideal-type gift-giving networks of Marcel Mauss and Bronislaw Malinowsky (Malinowsky 1922: esp. 270–375; Mauss 2002) than more recent assessments of pre-modern (including early medieval) society taken as an economic whole, in which gifts fulfilled a social role as part of a more diversified set of exchange mechanisms (Rosenwein 2003; Hénaff 2010: 308–14; Wickham 2010).

Yet if expectations are reconfigured to what has been called an “economy of honour” (Miller 1990; Hill 1995: 25–37; see now Baker 2013), *Beowulf* comes across as profoundly preoccupied with economic affairs: the exchange of brides to further the fortunes of peoples and families, and the winning of renown and recognition through words, deeds, and gifts. As has been stressed by historians and social scientists such as Karl Polanyi and his critics and successors (Polanyi 1944; Graeber 2001; Wilk and Cliggett 2007: 31–151; Le Goff 2012), ideas of what constitutes the economy and which motivations drive it have changed significantly in modern times – and even now material decisions are guided by much more than economic rationalism (Granovetter 1985; Zelizer 2011). Old English is not alone in frequently using vocabulary for economic exchange in reference to gifts, honor, and the trading of lives (Frotscher 2013). But terms denoting payment and purchase appear to be used with some meaning and care in *Beowulf*,⁶ even seeming to cast uncertainty on the efficacy of gifts they are applied to. Statements that gifts were repaid (*forgyldan* and *gyldan*) are comparatively few, and tend to come at moments tinged with pathos, when the relationship the gifts were meant to build comes under strain (cf. Berger and Leicester 1974: 44–50; Hall 1995: 93–107). By alluding to the repayment of unrequited (or problematically requited) gifts, the poet calls attention to the fault lines in heroic society and the twists of fortune yet to come (cf. Orchard 2003: 247). Thus Hrothgar tells Beowulf that he anticipates Hrothulf being a good lord to their sons in time, and that he will *gyldan* (1184) their sons in recognition of earlier glories: a future that may have seemed dubious given Beowulf’s lack of children and the (complex) back-story of the Scylding dynasty.⁷ Later in the poem, Beowulf recollects how he *þā māðmas þe hē mē sealde geald æt gūðe, swā mē gifeðe wæs, leohtan sweorde* (2490–1: “I repaid in battle the treasures he had given me, such was my good fortune with a bright sword”): the repayment he alludes to is of course his killing of Hygelac’s slayer and subsequent efforts, for he

⁶ The key words are (*ge*)*bicgan*, *cēap*, (*ge*)*cēapian* and, to a lesser extent, (*for*)*gyldan*; their associations are outlined in Bosworth and Toller 1972, Surber-Meyer 1994 and in the DOE. It should be noted that *forgyldan* and *gyldan*, the most common of these in *Beowulf*, could also be used in a more neutral way, for instance when returning blow for blow in combat (e.g. 1541, 1577 and 2968).

⁷ For a range of views on this issue see Orchard 2003: 245–7; and Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 177, with further references cited by both.

goes on to say that he only gained the sword he refers to after killing Dæghrafn with his bare hands. The impersonal construction related to the gift of vengeance and the sword in 2491 is, in this context, a perhaps significant departure from the usually personalized nature of gift-giving in *Beowulf*. Similarly, Wiglaf – when trying to rally his fellow warriors to return and help Beowulf – states how they *him ðā gūðgetawa gyldan woldon* (2636: “would repay him for the war-equipment”); indeed, in the course of his 27-line speech, he uses fourteen verbs, pronouns, or demonstratives in the first-person plural. And yet he was the only one of the warriors to turn back and make good on his obligations. As Wiglaf puts it when condemning them, Beowulf *gēnunga gūðgewædu wrāðe forwurpe* (2871b–2a: “had utterly and senselessly squandered those war-garments”) which he formerly bestowed on these men. A messenger, who may have been one of the disgraced warriors (Carnicelli 1975), also mentions that Hygelac *geald* Eofor and Wulf for the killing of Ongentheow, yet the reward (including his only daughter, given in marriage to Eofor) is described as *ofermāðmas* (2991–6), which Alaric Hall (2006) has convincingly read as excessive rather than merely great treasures. Hygelac thus gives away the future of his dynasty.

Other words with associations of payment and purchase (particularly *(ge)biggan*, *cēap* and *(ge)cēapian*) tend to appear when lives and blood rather than goods are at stake (cf. Baker 2013, 38; Frotscher 2013, 765). At 1304b–6a, the poet comments on Grendel’s mother’s bloody night-time raid on Heorot: *ne wæs þæt gewrixle til, þæt hīe on bā healfa biggan scoldon frēonda fēorum* (“that was not a good exchange, that they should pay for the lives of loved ones on both sides”). In his account of the Swedish wars, Beowulf laments the attacks launched by the Swedes, adding that his kin took revenge, *þēah ðe oððer his ealdre gebohte, heardan cēape* (2481–2a: “though one of them paid with his life, a hard bargain”). The dragon’s treasure was said by Wiglaf to have been *grimme gecēapod* (3012: “grimly purchased”) with the death of Beowulf himself, while Grendel *nō ... frōfre gebohte* (972b–3: “did not buy himself any relief”) by the loss of his arm. The *feohlēas gefeoht* (2441a: “inexpiable killing”) in which Hæthcyn accidentally slays his brother Herebeald is a *fyrenum gesyngad, hreðre hygemeðe* (2441b–2a: “a wrong most cruelly done, wearying to contemplate at heart”) (for commentary see Jurasinski 2006: 113–48). Money and payment all too often went hand in hand with life and death. In one interesting case payment is even apparently contrasted (unfavorably) with service for gifts: when Beowulf recalls the course of events which brought him to the throne and notes how he *þā mādmas þe hē mē sealde geald æt gūðe* (“repaid [Hygelac] in battle the treasures he had given me”), he adds that Hygelac hence had no need to seek a *wyrsan wīgfre-can weorðe gecypan* (2496: “an inferior war-maker, hire him for a price”).

Far from being naïve, the *Beowulf* poet in fact seems to have a sharp and value-laden understanding of economic processes. In his view the distant past was marked by a grim commingling of life, gifts, and treasure, with cold hard purchase banished from the main stage but always lurking in the wings (cf. Leisi 1953: esp. 263–7). There are echoes here of the talionic principles of early Anglo-Saxon law, which was heavily preoccupied with monetary requital for injuries and wrongs, many of them (at least to judge from surviving texts) violent (Miller 2006; Oliver 2011), and comparisons might also be drawn with the analysis of gift-giving made by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (esp. Bourdieu 1977: 177–8), who stressed the tension created by unwritten and malleable expectations of reciprocity, with calculation ever-present yet often unwelcome. There can be no question that the *Beowulf*-poet's nuanced conception of the economy displays to the full his mastery of both linguistic economy and literary subtlety (Liuzza 2012).

Assessment of *Beowulf* from an economic perspective therefore necessitates a shift in how one conceptualizes the economy: a valuable exercise in itself, requiring modern scholars to consider what an Anglo-Saxon poet (and presumably at least some of his audience) thought made elite society tick, and which has implications for how the poem can be related to practices in Anglo-Saxon society. Both stand to gain from the comparison: not only are there similarities, but we gain some sense of why there might be such similarities. Elite identity in Anglo-Saxon England was expressed through a formalized and in many ways archaic set of customs comparable to those of *Beowulf* (a large subject: see, *inter alia*, Wormald 2006, 30–105; Roberts 2000; Williams 2008; Crick 2009). We might equally learn part of the answer to why *Beowulf* portrays a distant yet immanent past in the fascinating way it does (another large subject: Frank 1982; Robinson 1985; Clemoes 1995: 3–116; Scheil 2008; Neidorf 2013 and 2014), focused on what might (only a little facetiously) be called boys and their toys writ legendarily large (cf. Lees 1994).

Gifts like those so numerous and prominent in *Beowulf* are recorded in a great many sources from Anglo-Saxon England and its neighbours. Ian Wood (2010) has recently discussed the many functions of gifts in the writings of the venerable Bede (d. 731), and Florin Curta has surveyed the still more numerous gifts which appear in the pages of Gregory of Tours and other Merovingian writers (2006). The single richest source for gifts in Anglo-Saxon England, however, comes in the form of charters. Some 1,500 charters survive in total, most of which include reference to some sort of gift, typically of land.⁸ These texts

⁸ The classic (summary) handlist is Sawyer 1968 (from which abbreviated reference numbers, prefixed S, are derived). Texts of these documents are printed in more scattered

provided a verbal and physical record of the transaction which could be used to uphold a claim to the property, and are highly diverse in their exact wording and details. Religious sanctions involving damnation and hellfire threatened anyone who contravened their contents. Charters therefore represented the solemn and public face of important transactions in society. Each was witnessed by a series of trustworthy individuals commonly including the king, bishops, and leading ealdormen and thegns, whose reputations and support would put weight behind the act recorded in the text (see in general Keynes 2013 and references there cited).

For present purposes, the emphasis falls on royal diplomas which record some form of two-way exchange. Their interest lies in the way they portray an exchange that modern observers might find very akin to a commercial transaction, in which one party sells and another buys. A minority of documents do indeed call upon the language of purchase using verbs such as (in Latin) *emere* and *comparare* or (in the vernacular) *sellan* and *bicgan*, among them memoranda recording sales which appear from the ninth century, and wills and dispute settlements which refer to sales of property (or arrange for such sales to take place in future) (Naismith 2013: 282). These tend, however, to report transactions rather than substantiate them as a title deed, which was a central function of the core group of diplomas.⁹ Crucially, diplomas frame all land transactions as gifts, and any recompense which the 'donor' received in return is also represented as a gift. One example is the text now known as Sawyer 471. Issued by Edmund, king of the English (939–46), probably in the year 940, it survives in the archive of Abingdon Abbey.¹⁰ The land covered by the charter is an estate of fifteen hides (i.e. theoretically capable of supporting fifteen families) at Garford in Berkshire. Edmund is made to state that he has freely given the land to a faithful thegn of his named Wulfric, but with an important qualification about why the donation has been made: *ego Eadmundus*

publications: Birch 1885–99 and Kemble 1839–48 between them cover most surviving material but are badly outdated in their editorial conventions, and are being replaced by a series of new archive-based editions, published under the auspices of the British Academy.

⁹ It should be noted that conceptions of landholding in Anglo-Saxon England are in themselves a matter of some complexity. Tenure could take two principal forms: 'bookland' (*bocland*) and 'folkland' (*folcland*), the former characterized by written title and a greater degree of freedom in disposition, the latter by more restrictive customary right (of necessity much more obscure because it has left little footprint in the sources). For a recent summary see Hudson 2012: 94–114, but for present purposes (unless signaled otherwise) charters can be understood to signal a change in the holder of land with all the rights and status of the previous holder. Income from the land was a key concern, while some rights (above all the *trinoda necessitas* of army service, fortress building, and bridge maintenance) remained vested in the king.

¹⁰ This archive has been edited in the British Academy series, and the relevant charter is Kelly 2000–1: no. 33.

... *cuidam fideli meo ministro uocitato nomine Wulfrico, pro eius amabili obedientia eiusque placabili pecunia quam mihi in sue deuotionis obsequio detulit, xv mansas libenter largiendo donauit* ("I Edmund ... have given fifteen hides by free donation to a certain loyal thegn of mine named Wulfric, for his amiable obedience and for his pleasing payment which he gave to me out of the deference of his devotion"). The charter's language of donation (i.e. the verb *donare*) is unambiguous: it would not be out of place in hundreds of other Anglo-Saxon charters which describe seemingly straightforward donations of land but with no counter-gift. On the face of it, what the text describes is the king being moved to make a donation partly by the good service of his thegn, and partly by his handover of an unspecified amount of money (*pecunia*). There is nothing overtly commercial to the transaction at all, and this is far from an isolated case. Several other charters of the 930s and 940s especially provide a similarly detailed background explanation, but as far back as the late seventh century charters record donations of land prompted by gifts. The precise formulation and vocabulary were flexible, with some common features of impressively long standing and wide use. Above all, the actual donation of land was couched as just that: a donation. 'Payment' was very often described as pleasing or satisfactory; already in 686, a Kentish charter labels a payment as a *pretium competens* (S 9; ed. Kelly 1995: no 7). These characteristics can also be found in Anglo-Saxon charters as late as the eleventh century, preserved in archives from many parts of England.¹¹

Gift-giving was hard-wired into the etiquette of land transfer in Anglo-Saxon England (Campbell 2000: 227–45). Were one able to step back in time and observe the arrangements and ceremonies which culminated in the production of these documents, it is likely that many of the counter-gifts handed over in land transactions might in practice have been closer to a purchase price in function. Identifying such covert sales among Anglo-Saxon charter accounts of land transactions is normally impossible, however: there is no meaningful correlation of 'price' with ratings of land (Naismith 2013: 304–8), and in any case to attempt to distinguish true gifts from 'gifts that one pays for' is to miss much of the point. Anglo-Saxon charters configure the large majority of land transactions as gifts, despite any sum handed over in partial or total recompense, suggesting that this was in some sense the preferred means of transferring authority. The account in *Beowulf* of how the hero dutifully passed on his gifts from Hrothgar to Hygelac, and immediately received land and treasure in return (2144–99), is an obvious parallel. Whether payment was financially proximate to the

¹¹ I have recently published a historically-focused study of these documents, including a list of known examples (Naismith 2013), as well as a study of the implications raised by land payments for social history (Naismith 2016).

value of the land is as immaterial to the surviving charter record as it was to Beowulf and Hygelac – though the fact that ‘counter-gifts’ were recorded at all underlines the profound importance of reciprocity in early medieval society (Campbell 2000: 227–45). Reference to what was received by a king or other donor in return may therefore have helped to reinforce the new landholder’s claim, should it ever be challenged: thus some mentions of counter-gifts/payments were added after the rest of the charter had been written, or were specifically said to have been handed over to the family of the previous landholder to forestall any future quarrel (Naismith 2013: 285–7).

The abiding rhetoric of gift one finds in charters relates particularly to the elite. Landholding was one of the defining characteristics of high social status in Anglo-Saxon England. Tenth- and eleventh-century legal texts stressed that an aspiring thegn needed to have five or more hides of land, and there may have been a higher category of those possessing forty hides or over (Naismith 2016: 38–9). Earlier, in eighth-century Northumbria, Bede lamented that there was not sufficient land to establish *fili nobilium aut emeritorum militum* (“sons of nobles and veteran thegns”) in proper style (Bede, *Letter to Bishop Ecgbert*, c. 11, ed. Grocock and Wood 2013, 144–7), implying that these groups (and, one presumes, the *nobiles* who fathered them) together with the Church were prominent among landholders. There were undoubtedly peasants who held land independently as well (Naismith 2016: 36–7), but the emphasis in both historical and literary texts falls heavily on those who combined landholding with high status and (usually) a military role. *Beowulf* is no different. It paints a picture of young warriors aspiring to win land through the favor of lords (2994–8), sometimes as their fathers had done before them (2190–9, 2493a and 2606–8), through a combination of new grants and winning the conferral of what was due to them by inheritance (Drout 2007; Hill 1995).

The correlation between the mode of exchange favored in the imagined elite society of *Beowulf*, and the way the upper echelons of Anglo-Saxon society transferred property as represented through charters, can be extended to the materials used in such transactions. As noted above, the poet of *Beowulf* employs an extensive and nuanced vocabulary for treasure (Taylor 1986: esp. 205; Tyler 2006a: 25–100). Much of this leaves unstated the physical form such treasure took. But when the material treasure was made from is specified, one substance sticks out: gold. Gold is referred to over fifty times in the poem, either alone or as part of a compound (cf. Silber 1977). It stands as a metonym for wealth and treasure more widely: a lord can be a *goldgyfa* (2652), Heorot is a *goldsele* (715, 1253, 1639 and 2083) and the curse on the dragon’s hoard is a *goldhwatu* (3074). Giving gold secures loyalty; the rub lies in acquiring more of it, normally by force (Baker 2013: 35–76). It thus serves a dual role, as both a desirable and fruitful treasure and

as a more poisonous force, especially in the latter part of the poem concerning the dragon fight, although hints of its destructive capacities can also be detected earlier (Silber 1977: 13–19).

Whatever else it might be, gold is present in significant quantity in *Beowulf*. Silver is not mentioned explicitly at all (cf. Frank 1992: 55),¹² and gems are rare. Gold becomes the gift-giving metal par excellence: weapons and armor (themselves often adorned with gold) are the only other major part of the poem's range of treasure. Some distance between the material world of treasure in *Beowulf* and that of historical sources and surviving artefacts is naturally to be expected. The stuff of elite gift-giving was by its nature exceptional. The distance is greatest in the case of coined money (which, as already noted, probably never appears in *Beowulf* at all). Whatever date is put on the composition of *Beowulf*, it would have come into existence at a time when there was some form of monetary economy based on silver pennies. New evidence in the form of thousands of coin-finds has significantly enriched understanding of the role of cash in Anglo-Saxon England in recent decades.¹³ It is now apparent that a significant level of monetary circulation emerged already in the pioneering days of the conversion of England. Gold shillings modeled on Merovingian *tremisses* appeared in England early in the seventh century, and metamorphosed into the first silver pennies later in the same century. By the early eighth century, silver coins were being made and used in great quantity in eastern England, as well as in other regions around the rim of the North Sea, especially Frisia (Grierson and Blackburn 1986; Blackburn 1995 and 2003; Metcalf 1993–4).¹⁴ There were vacillations in the scale of coin-use and production in the later eighth century and subsequently (cf. Naismith 2012), but substantial circulation of silver pennies remained a hallmark of Anglo-Saxon society down to the Norman Conquest (and after). It should be stressed that silver was the overwhelmingly dominant metal in coin-finds from after about 670. Gold coins began to be made again on a small scale in the later eighth century, but were quite distinct from the prevailing

¹² Elizabeth Tyler (2006a: 18–22 and 2006b: 228–32) has shown very effectively how rare silver is in Old English poetry more widely, with its 27 appearances being mostly either collocated with gold or prompted by the needs of alliteration.

¹³ The contribution made by users of metal-detectors in England and Wales has been crucial. Their discoveries are logged on two main databases: the Corpus of Early Medieval Coin Finds (www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/emc/) at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; and the Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk/), co-ordinated from the British Museum. It is worth adding that few other European countries have comparable legal mechanisms for handling such finds, or equivalent databases: the European context of England and Wales's coin-finds therefore remains unclear.

¹⁴ There was particularly close interaction between eastern England and Frisia – more so than between England and Francia, if the evidence of coin-finds carries much weight; a point explored with reference to *Beowulf* in Bremner 2004; see also Oliver 2014 for connections in legal practice between England and Frisia.

silver pennies. Individual coins were heavier, modeled on either the Roman and Byzantine *solidus* or the Muslim dinar, while their appearance (at least in the later eighth and ninth centuries) was highly variable: inspiration came from a variety of Roman, Byzantine, Frankish, and Muslim sources, although later specimens from the early tenth century onwards were made simply by striking gold with dies of the regular silver types. All conclusions regarding this later gold coinage must remain tentative, as just eight specimens survive (Blackburn 2007). By comparison, some 10,000 single-finds of silver coins are known from England: this leaves out at least 50,000 specimens from hoards found in Britain and Ireland, some 65,000 from Scandinavian finds, and a great many more which have no known provenance. No such detailed numbers are available for other precious metal objects, but (despite a few exceptional finds such as the Staffordshire hoard and the Mound One burial from Sutton Hoo) gold is again very rare compared to silver (Blackburn 2007; 73–7). It is also frequently found alongside silver, sometimes very much in the minority: a hoard brought from England to Rome, labeled as a gift for Pope Marinus II (942–6), included one (Byzantine) gold coin alongside over 830 silver coins (Naismith and Tinti forthcoming).

The contrast between finds of gold and silver and their occurrence in Anglo-Saxon charters and related documents is jarring. Charters which specify the metal used for payment (or which use a unit conventionally associated with either gold or silver) include 221 uses of gold, 45 of both gold and silver together and 237 of silver (Naismith 2013: 308–13).¹⁵ Silver is only just in the majority. Moreover, payments specifically made in silver pennies (*denarii*/*pæningas*) are even rarer. A total of 46 references are known, most of them referring to annual payments promised in wills. Tellingly, some of the larger payments consist of substantial numbers of pennies – hundreds, even thousands – which could have been expressed in pounds or shillings of account. The fact that they were not suggests that payment in large quantities of silver coin was unusual in the context of land transactions.

Of course, it is difficult to know exactly what form most payments took. Pounds could refer to units of weight or account, the latter in either coined money or other commodities of equivalent value. Money was a flexible concept in Anglo-Saxon England. One famous and early charter from Peterborough Abbey (S 1804; ed. Kelly 2009, no. 4C) records how Æthelred, king of the Mercians (675–704), gave fifteen hides at a place called *Cedenanac* to Abbot Hedda, in return for 500 *solidi*: the text immediately clarifies that these consisted of twelve feather mattresses with ornate pillows and sheets, a slave and a slave-girl, an ornamented

¹⁵ These and all other figures exclude charters thought to be largely or wholly spurious.

gold brooch and two horses with two saddles. Yet it is on the whole more likely that payments in pounds, shillings, mancuses, and so on consisted of gold and silver than not. A large proportion of charters do indeed specify that a sum was of precious metal, often in fact of pure or purest metal, recalling biblical specifications of metallic purity (Naismith 2013: 310). Objects made partly or wholly of precious metal occur, often as payment or as a bequest, on seventy-nine occasions. These include rings, jewelry, vessels, and gold- or silver-ornamented weapons; many are rated in value or weight using the same units as money. Conversely, only thirty-one instances are known of commodities other than precious metal, including crops, drink, and livestock: most of these occur alongside (and are clearly distinguished from) sums in precious metal. Compared to the rest of post-Roman Europe, the prevalence of precious metal in Anglo-Saxon land payments is decidedly idiosyncratic; animals, textiles, foodstuffs, and other commodities were commonplace (often in fact much more common than silver or gold) in areas of contemporary Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and elsewhere (Davies 2002; Hammer 1997; Siems 1992: 388–90; Feller 1998: 361–86; Balzaretto 2010). In England, paying or giving in return for land was a comparatively rarefied business, at least as portrayed in charters:¹⁶ it required high-status means of payment, and well-defined and highly traditional etiquette. Overall, it was a matter for the elite, and those aspiring to be identified as part of the elite (Naismith 2016: 39–41).

Paradoxically, Anglo-Saxon land transactions are the best recorded aspect of the contemporary economy, yet also one of the most complex and probably one of the least representative compared to the totality of exchanges going on in society. Land payments in charters are dominated by a rhetoric of gift, even though it is probable that they often veered more towards balanced than general reciprocity; that is to say, exchange of broadly commensurate goods in a discrete transaction, rather than open-handed dispensation without regard to value (Sahlins 1972: 185–204). Real-world acts of exchange as a whole lay at some remove from the world of *Beowulf*, but the elite exchanges in charters were significantly closer. Similarities arise not simply in individual features such as emphasis on gifts and gold, but in the combination of these features. This series of correlations commands attention, not least because of its reach and durability. Unfortunately,

¹⁶ This is not to say that other groups in society, such as peasants, never gave, bought, or sold land. In fact, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, scattered but collectively significant evidence can be marshaled to show that there was a widespread land market operating at this level. But it rarely impinges on the charter record: most such transactions are recorded in monastic histories charting the growth of institutional endowment (e.g. the *Libellus Æthelwoldi episcopi* of Ely), or in Domesday Book, and even then incidentally (Naismith 2016).

it is hence of no great use in ongoing efforts to date and localize the poem. Like classical Old English verse, the etiquette of land transactions proved remarkably long-lasting.¹⁷ The distinctive characteristics of charters recording payment appear already in the very earliest records of several different kingdoms,¹⁸ dating to the late seventh and early eighth centuries, and persist until the eleventh century. There were changes along the way: tenth-century royal diplomas from the time of Æthelstan onwards generally tend towards more detailed and elaborate accounts, for example. Whether these later accounts and the events they relate to were in some way artificial is a question beyond the available evidence; the timelessness of this aspect of the charter tradition may be illusory, but it is also largely impenetrable. As presented, these transactions buy into a vibrant and conservative tradition of how the upper ranks of society did business in the sight of God and each other.

A more productive way to approach parallels between the charters and *Beowulf* in representing exchange is to ask why they might occur. Represent is the operative word, for in both cases there is little doubt that what the reader encounters is a highly stylized construction of acts of exchange, which makes sense within its own frame of reference, but does not necessarily bear much resemblance to how the rest of society carried out its business, or even to how kings and ealdormen did so outside the context of high-profile land transactions. Art impinged on life in guiding how the elite did their business with one eye fixed firmly on the past. In this setting, the symbolic value of charters comes to the fore. These documents sought fundamentally to encapsulate a moment, often even serving physically in a ceremonial act of donation (Keynes 2013, esp. 64–92), thereby capturing in words a particular view of past and present events for the benefit of posterity (most immediately, but not solely, in the form of the beneficiary) (cf. Smith 2012: 70–107). Charters were by no means disinterested form-filling exercises: each represents the verbalization of one stage in a chain of words and deeds, calculated to achieve a specific result by the agents involved (examples of recent work on this theme include Koziol 2012; Roach 2013). In the words of Sir Frank Stenton, Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas were “the solemn and formal documents issued in the king’s name and reflecting the whole power of the state” (Stenton 1955: 1). They thus depended heavily on fulfilling the expectations of an elite audience in the present

¹⁷ In this way, social contextualization of the poem moves beyond the more problematic and specific historical associations highlighted by Elizabeth Tyler (2006b: 226–7).

¹⁸ In geographical terms, Northumbria is the most poorly represented area, but this is probably because precious few charters survive at all from northern England, and no authentic ones at all from before the tenth century (Woodman 2012); moreover, Bede and other authors provide a number of clues that land could be acquired for payment in much the same way as charters from the south indicate (Naismith 2013: 289).

and future by recourse to the past, including the antique authority which clung to the king and interactions with him.

A concept of exchange bound up with what were thought to be ancient and courtly ideals was as much a part of the literary arena of the charter as it was a part of *Beowulf* and related literature. The ecclesiastical scribes and patrons responsible for charters recording these actions and framing them in the proper fashion probably stemmed from an aristocratic background, as (it is widely thought) the audience and perhaps even poet of *Beowulf* did as well (cf. Wormald 2006: 30–105; Whitelock 1951; Bjork and Obermeier 1996). All these groups moved in a society which clothed itself in the trappings of an imagined heroic past replete with gifts and distant from commerce. Even if archaizing, this was far from a stagnant tradition, with adaptation of old expressions to new ideals throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries (which was also of course the period in which most older poetic texts were copied in their surviving form) (cf. Frank 1991; Tyler 2006a: 157–9). Rulers continued to be conceptualized in poetic contexts using much the same language and imagery as pseudo-historic figures of the distant past (Trilling 2009: 157–74 and 194–213): hence King Æthelstan (924–39) was still a *bēaggiefu* (“ring-giver”) in *The Battle of Brunanburh* (2a), as was Edgar in *The Death of Edgar* (10a), while Edward the Confessor *weolan brytnode* (7b: “distributed treasures”) in *The Death of Edward* and Earl Byrhtnoth in the *Battle of Maldon* was a *sincgyfa* (“treasure-giver”) (278a) (Tyler 2006a: 22–4). “Historical poetry,” as noted by Renée Trilling, “fosters a cultural identity founded ... on a shared belief in a glorious past and its continuing significance for the present” (Trilling 2009: 131; see also Thormann 1997; Tyler 2006b: esp. 249–50). Giving of gifts in gold and silver was thus an enduring element of elite identity in Anglo-Saxon England, interwoven with other symbols and ceremonies of heroic culture. *Beowulf* helped build and reinforce its audience’s conception of their own position by illustrating how their ancestors had supposedly led a magnified form of the same lifestyle. Yet the poem capitalizes elegantly and perceptively on the gulf which surrounded elite society’s fixation on gifts and golden treasure: buying, selling, and money are present in an often threatening, liminal fashion. Its stylized portrayal of the economy answered to the expectations of a society used to the ideal of gifts as well as the more complex actuality that surrounded them on all sides.

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Beowulf Studies from Tolkien to Fulk¹

Tom Shippey

J.R.R. Tolkien's British Academy lecture of 1936 has been hailed many times as marking a new era in *Beowulf*-studies. It also marked the end of an era. His allegory of the tower, his comic rendition of the Babel of conflicting voices, these, as R.D. Fulk has pointed out, are a "derisive" if genial critique of a whole largely-German tradition of nineteenth-century scholarship (2007c: 133). Much of this was admittedly fanciful, and much of it was tainted by a romantic nationalism rendered unacceptable in the twentieth century. Yet it was also powered by the achievements of comparative philology, for the humanities the Darwinian discipline of the nineteenth century and beyond, and Tolkien's own ruling passion: he said of himself, "I am a *pure* philologist" (Tolkien 1981: 264). It is a sad irony that his 1936 lecture in practice handed over the entry-permit to his favorite poem to people whom he might have classed all too often as "misologists."² Ever since 1936, one might say, there has been a struggle going on for the soul of *Beowulf*-studies; and for a long time, whatever Tolkien might have wished, it was his professional adversaries the critics, the New Critics, the literary critics, who were winning.

This was not immediately apparent. Considering the praise lavished on the 1936 lecture since, it is surprising how little notice of it was taken at the time. The most perceptive of the three reviews it received came from Friedrich Klaeber. He gave Tolkien credit for his "engaging warmth and power of persuasion," but added that "some unavoidable questions" remained unanswered, and the whole "hinted more than it performed" (1937: 323).³ Moreover, when scholarly attention began to turn back to *Beowulf* after World War II, both T.M. Gang (1952) and J.C. van Meurs (1955) were unimpressed. Tolkien argued in a circle (Gang, 3); he made unwarranted assumptions about pre-Christian English mythology (van Meurs, 119); his comparison of the poem's structure to that of the alliterative line was just an "accidental resemblance" (van

¹ I am grateful for the assistance given by Jamie Emery and her colleagues at Pius XII Library in Saint Louis, in making books and articles available through JSTOR and ILLiad, without which research-at-a-distance would be impossible.

² Tolkien coined the word "misology" in his "Valedictory Address" of 1959 (1997: 225).

³ "Mit gewinnender Wärme und Überzeugungskraft ... manche unvermeidliche Frage ... mehr andeutend als ausführend."

Meurs, 119); moreover, "it is extremely difficult to see what his critical position is" (Gang, 10–11). Nevertheless, Tolkien had made one point which, in the English-speaking world, was all but universally accepted and welcomed, which was that it was time to read the poem simply for itself, as a work of art.

This was the entry-permit mentioned above. From the early nineteenth century onwards, virtually no native-English speaker had ever been accepted by German and Scandinavian scholarship as a true *Philolog*: they did not have the specialized skills and training. But one did not have to be a *Philolog* to have an opinion about a work of art! Moreover, the discovery of artistic subtlety and unexpressed irony was a highly congenial occupation for literary critics, as was defending the poem against the old accusations of structural weakness and disunity. If one were to compile a tally of topics addressed in the post-war generation, probably the favorite one would be the demonstration that alleged "digressions" had purpose in immediate context, in the poem as a whole, or both together.

The lead here was given by Adrien Bonjour, whose *The Digressions in Beowulf* came out in 1950. The aim of his book was to consider "what part do the various digressions play in the poem considered as a work of art" (xv), and in five chapters he worked through the Scyld Prologue, the episodes of Beowulf's life and Geatish history, the historical, legendary, and Biblical digressions, and the story of the "Last Survivor," noting in almost every case that apparent digressions play "a significant and often quite subtle part in the organic structure of the poem" (43), often being linked to each other through "parallelism and contrast" (72).

All these conclusions were rapidly taken up. For some decades, indeed, articles demonstrating the importance to the poem of its allusions to Sigemund, Heremod, Offa, Geatish history etc., became something of a cottage-industry of scholarship. This extended to commentary on the "Finnsburh Episode," which had always attracted particular attention, both because of the existence of a provocatively different account in the "Finnsburg Fragment," and because of the appearance in both of Hengest – who might or might not be the same person as the possibly historical founder of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent. Historicity was, however, no longer on the agenda, except for a few older scholars, having been firmly if somewhat insincerely dismissed by Tolkien (see end of this essay). The view was generally accepted that the key to the Episode's significance in the poem was the ironic linking of Hildeburh and Wealhtheow, innocent sufferers of past and future respectively. Beyond that, psychological rather than historical or logistical explanations were in vogue.

The most provocative digression in the poem was, however, what Bonjour had called "the Unferth Intermezzo." Between 1950 and 1980

some fifteen articles appeared on this topic, so many that it is most economical to describe them in terms of the issues they took up: on which, of course, every author had a different view. The hare was set running by Morton Bloomfield on "Beowulf and Christian Allegory" (1949–51). Bloomfield proposed that the name Un-ferth should be interpreted as "Un-Peace" or *Discordia*. Regardless of its merit, the argument raised several important issues. (1) What did the name mean? Could it be, not *Un-friþ* but *Un-ferþ*, "Un-intelligence" or "folly" (so Robinson 1968)? (2) Should he be seen as a coward / traitor / fratricide, or as a recognized champion jealous of competitors? (3) What did the word *þyle* mean? Did it indicate a *scurra* or *histrion*, with the undignified sense of "jester, mocker" (Rosier 1962), or a court functionary, a spokesman (Baird 1970)? (4) Was he perhaps a heathen priest or a wizard? (5) What attitude should one take to what seems a discourteous reception of a guest? In this welter of contending opinions one article which stands out is Carol Clover's "The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode" (1980). Looking at a large number of verbal clashes in Old Norse literature, Clover showed that the dialogue over Breca followed a familiar pattern of which it was "eminently typical" (467). Clover's was one of several pieces (see below) which got good results by looking outside Old English to the much larger corpus of Old Norse.

From the 1950s there was, then, general agreement that there were *no* digressions in *Beowulf*, and that the poem clearly showed "organic unity," a notorious New Critical cliché. There was, however, much less agreement about what its structural principle might be, and without a sense of structure it was hard to locate the "controlling theme," another New Critical *sine qua non*.

The first influential solution to the problem came from H.L. Rogers, "Beowulf's Three Great Fights" (1955). Rogers's point was that the poem's trajectory was surely downwards. In each of the "three great fights" Beowulf made more preparations and experienced greater difficulty. At the same time his adversaries became less motivelessly malignant, Grendel's mother attacking for revenge (and to retrieve her son's arm), the dragon retaliating against theft. This does not excuse them, but it does add an element of moral complexity. The poem's downward trajectory indicated that its theme was the failure of heroism.

The idea was influentially elaborated by John Leyerle. His "Beowulf the Hero and the King" (1965) insisted that the poem's theme was "the fatal contradiction at the core of heroic society" (89). Aggressive behavior, proper in a hero, was incompatible with the prudence or foresight required of a king. Beowulf's single-handed attack on the dragon was the last of his "foolhardy deeds" (95), and brought about the ruin of his people. The only excuse for Beowulf must be that it was not his fault alone but that of his whole society. One critic after another joined in to remind us that "violent solutions lead only to

further violence" (Kahrl 1972: 198), that the theme of the poem was "threats to social order" (Hume 1975: 5), or more positively "societal interdependence" (Burlin 1975: 43) or "community" (Niles 1983: 226), reaching something of a peak sufficiently indicated by their title in H. Berger and H.M. Leicester's "Social Structure as Doom: The Limits of Heroism in *Beowulf*" (1974). It helped that the whole social-critique notion was readily compatible with, for instance, Robert Kaske's vision of "*Sapientia et Fortitudo* as the Controlling Theme of *Beowulf*" (1958). There was after all no doubt that the poem contained images of prowess without wisdom (Hygelac) and wisdom without prowess (Hrothgar), while Beowulf is at one point complimented for having both – an old head on young shoulders, to put the thought in a demotic context. In fighting the dragon though ... The precise degree of blame or admiration was arguable, and accordingly argued.

Two years later, in a second influential article, Leyerle introduced the idea of "The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*" (1967). Leyerle's piece picked up the interest in "digressions," was reinforced by apt quotation from eighth-century commentary on the art of poetry, and convincingly integrated style and meaning, e.g. with the remark that "Understatement is thus inherent in interlace structure, a characteristic that fits the heroic temper of the north" (6). Even better, Leyerle supplied others with a method, that of tracing out this or that particular thread. "Interlace" became a feature of article-titles, as did threads and webs.

There were other ideas about structure, sometimes based on visual analogies. Theodore Andersson (1980) produced a diagram of zigzags to show convincingly how a pattern of reversals – hope / fear, success / failure, joy / grief – could be seen throughout the poem on both micro- and macro-levels. Ward Tonsfeldt matched Constance Hieatt's "Envelope Patterns" in speech (1975) with "Ring Patterns" on a larger scale (1977). Hold-outs also remained. Emboldened by the arrival of oral-formulaic ideas (see below) Francis Magoun attempted twice to resurrect the old idea of a patchwork *Beowulf* betrayed by internal contradictions (1958, 1963), but was firmly refuted by Arthur Brodeur (1970).

More significantly, the authoritative figure of Kenneth Sisam declared in his *The Structure of Beowulf* (1965), that the emperor had no clothes, the "emperor" in this case being not only Tolkien (with whom Sisam had had a fraught relationship for more than forty years) but the critical consensus as a whole. Since the 1920s the view had become established, after initial incredulity, that in the background of Beowulf's visit to Heorot there lay the tragedy of the Fall of the Scyldings, triggered by Hrothulf, the Hrolf Kraki of Danish legend. It gave a deep sense of foreboding to the whole central section of the poem, pivoting on the figure of Wealhtheow, with her two speeches to Hrothgar and to Beowulf, and signaled by two allusive remarks by the poet about trust and treachery.

Brodeur declared confidently (1959: 156), "No-one doubts that these two passages forecast allusively the impending revolt of Hrothulf." He was wrong. Sisam did. The poem was "a serial in three instalments" (4), and so much for unity. The Fall of the Scyldings was so much "learned romance" (34). As for Wealhtheow, he thought no audience "would be ingenious enough" to detect the parallels proposed (39). For good measure Sisam declared the "Modþryðo" digression a "crude excrescence" (49) and the Ongentheow scene almost "a caricature of the practice of digression" (13).

Sisam had at least thrown down the gauntlet to the developed post-Tolkien consensus. It was picked up most effectively by Edward Irving's *A Reading of Beowulf* (1968), a model in its good sense, accessibility, and originality. From almost fifty years later I recall being struck, for instance, by Irving's discussion of Wealhtheow's speeches at "The Great Banquet," his demonstration of "The Pattern of Until," his astute commentary on the scene with Wiglaf's sword, to name only three highlights. He was the true successor to Tolkien in terms of "engaging warmth and power of persuasion."

One final puzzle inherited from the past was the poet's evident Christianity contrasted with the paganism of the time in which it was set (of which the poet must surely have been aware). The question of the poet's attitude to his heroes, and to Beowulf in particular, became acute if one considered the moment of his death, when his soul went "to seek *sōþfæstra dōm*, the judgement of the righteous." Stanley Greenfield thought the lines "seem to state unequivocally that the hero's soul has found salvation" (1985: 393). In *Beowulf*-studies, however, there is nothing so unequivocal that it cannot be denied. The condemnation by Alcuin of old heroes and songs about them was very familiar, and in 1978 Whitney Bolton's *Alcuin and Beowulf* declared that Alcuin was the true "representative of the Christian intellectuals that a mid-eighth-century English audience must mostly have contained" (5). His view of the likely audience is unevidenced, and it is hard to forgive his insistence that "Little [in the word *sōþfæst*] points to judgement after death" (167): Bolton must have known that it is regularly used in prose and poetry to indicate the saved as opposed to the sinners (*synnigan*) at Judgment Day. Eric Stanley had however seen the poem Bolton's way in his commentary on *hæþenra hyht* in 1963, going further in 1966 to see a hint of "everlasting damnation" even for Beowulf (139).

Meanwhile, even those as sure as Stanley or Bolton that *Beowulf* must be read in Christian terms could not agree among themselves. Father M.B. McNamee had posed the question "*Beowulf* – An Allegory of Salvation?" in 1960, and answered "yes." To him Beowulf was quite certainly a Christ-figure. By contrast, Margaret Goldsmith had seen a Beowulf "deluded by the dragon's gold" who "carries our minds back to ... the myth of Adam's rebellion" (1970: 269). She had perhaps found

inspiration from D.W. Robertson Jr., whose view that all medieval literature should be read from the perspective of the *Patrologia Latina* had reached Anglo-Saxon studies in an article of 1951: an article in which he saw Grendel as “the type of militant heretic or worldly man,” while the hart which refuses to plunge into the monsters’ mere represents (by reversal) “the faithful Christian who seeks his Lord in the Living Waters” (33). Goldsmith brought the writings of St Augustine, St Gregory and others to bear on *Beowulf*. Her arguments were difficult to counter if one accepted their premise, that, for instance, “Anyone to whom Aldhelm’s phrase *bellator Job* made sense, would, I think, pick up the hint” contained in a half-line of the poem (1970: 143). But how many people like that were there in Anglo-Saxon England, or indeed anywhere else?

Responses were often scornful, Bruce Mitchell for instance dismissing her articles as “an example of misplaced ingenuity and special pleading” (1963: 131). A three-way discussion arranged by the editor of *Anglo-Saxon England* (1973) was not productive. Goldsmith restated her position. William Whallon and Charles Donahue were unconvinced. Allegorists and literalists were talking past each other without making contact, as were those who saw in the hero a Christ-figure and those who saw him as an emblem of pride.

Might there be some middle way, some place or time when Christians could refrain from consigning their pagan ancestors to Hell everlasting? Charles Donahue suggested that there was at least an “illuminating analogy” in Irish writings, including legal texts (1949–51: 276), and went on to argue for an “Insular Mode” of Christianity which was marked by a “reverent attitude to the pre-Christian past” and “stood in marked contrast to the contemporary Continental mode,” sc. of writers like Alcuin (1965: 71). Larry Benson (1967) looked rather to the milieu of St Willibrord and the Anglo-Saxon missions to Frisia and Germany. This is an area where one might agree first with Fred Robinson, who pointed to a tone of “combined admiration and regret” as dominant in the poem (1985: 11), and also with Robert Kaske (1971) and Ruth Mellinkoff (1979, 1981), both of whom noted the presence in Anglo-Saxon England of lost traditions concerning Cain and the monster-races, leading to confusions seen both in the text of *Beowulf* (see Neidorf 2015a), and in Alcuin himself: there was a “hidden hinterland of ideas” (Mellinkoff 1981: 196). These would be fruitfully considered, in the context of the Nowell codex, by Andy Orchard’s 1995 *Pride and Prodigies*. Looking at the relationship between monsters and monster-fighters, Orchard quoted Nietzsche: “if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you” (168).

Digressions, structure, theme, religious orientation: all these topics centered on seeing the poem “as a poem,” as Tolkien had demanded, and as a whole. Several of the most successful contributions in these

years focused, however, on separate scenes, notably Mitchell (1963), Ringler (1966), Pope (1970). What still seemed missing was very much interest in the poem as poetry. Hope was briefly raised by the introduction to the field of the “oral-formulaic” theory inspired by the researches of Milman Parry and his assistant Albert Lord. In a *Speculum* article Magoun pointed to “The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry” (1953). This offered not only a new idea but also a new technique: solid underlinings for repeated half-lines, broken underlining for partly-repeated ones, all ending in a percentage score. For a while there was much activity with regard to Old English poetry as a whole (eg. Creed 1959), but it was brought to a halt first by H.L. Rogers’s comments on “The Crypto-Psychological Character of the Oral Formula” (1966), and then by Benson’s demonstration in the same year that the *Meters of Boethius*, which clearly were *not* orally composed, were just as formulaic percentage-wise as other Old English poems. The most powerful attempt to reconcile clear indications both of oral origins and of literate composition has come from Ursula Schaefer’s book *Vokalität* (1992). Works written in German, however, have regrettably suffered from the monoglot development of Anglophone education.

Very few authors found anything to say about “The Art of Old English Verse Composition,” to quote the title of two valuable articles by Lydia Fakundiny (both 1970), which depended on awareness of Kuhn’s law. Mariann Reinhard’s 1976 book on “alliterative collo-cations,” published in Switzerland, deserved more attention than it received; and Fred Robinson’s *Beowulf and the Appositive Style* (1985) tried to match an obvious stylistic feature (derived from the practice of oral composition) with the poet’s habits more generally. One might conclude that New Critical practice was unable to cope with a (technically-defined) “low-information” mode of poetry (Shippey 2010), and that “A comprehensive study of rhetorical style in early Germanic verse, or even in some of the individual national traditions, remains to be written” (Fulk 1996a: 63).

By the late 1970s, forty years after Tolkien, the field of *Beowulf* studies was showing signs of weariness. Attempts to think of something new began to verge on the desperate: Lewis Nicholson’s 1975 argument that in the Finnsburg Episode Hunlafing was really Hun(ferth Ecg)lafing, that the *hildelēoma* of line 1143 was Hrunting, that Unferth was accordingly a Frisian who had killed his brothers Oslaf and Guthlaf, took us back to the days of the search for a better poem which had unfortunately not been written. In the same festschrift John Gardner – whose novel *Grendel* (1971) had indeed re-written the poem from the monsters’ point of view – went on to connect the Battle of Ravenswood with the dragon-fight, and to see Beowulf’s death as a punishment: when he dies, “it is Ongentheow’s ghost which kills him” (22).

More insidiously, there was a feeling that on many issues – structure, theme, attitude to pagans, and to heroes – there was now a fixed scale of opinions. Critics operated by moving their pointers up and down on the scale, declaring their personal positions but without much hope or intention of persuading others to accept them. Worse, there was a feeling that the poem had been increasingly massaged into a shape congenial to the academy – ironic, moralistic, emotionally rather flat. Scholars had found themselves a comfort zone. Joseph Harris, looking back on the situation from 1992, summed up the situation by saying that it had become one of “incomplete agreement” (29). Obviously no-one writing an article or a book was going to say that he or she agreed entirely with what had been said before; but the points of difference were narrowing.

People outside the field were furthermore beginning to notice. In 1974 the historian Eric John commented testily that what Tolkien’s lecture had done was “give licence to an unbridled speculation unusual in medieval studies” (393), that the poem was “essentially a feudal poem shot through with the values of a warrior society” (416), and that not much progress seemed to have been made since the days of H.M. Chadwick (referring probably to Chadwick 1912). In 1978 another historian, Patrick Wormald, published a long piece in a volume of *British Archaeological Records*. This too observed that Tolkien’s lecture had led to effects which “would perhaps have been disowned by the author,” such that “evidence of artistic refinement [had been sought] in some of the poem’s least promising features” (37). What had been forgotten was “the aristocratic environment of early English Christianity” (57), to which Bede but not *Beowulf* was an exception. Wormald too would later turn back to Chadwick’s 1912 comments on the poem (2006). These were outsiders’ views, but all the more valuable for that. The field needed a shake-up, and it got it.

This came in the form of a conference held in Toronto in 1980 on “The Dating of *Beowulf*.” Up till then the consensus on the poem’s date had not moved far from Tolkien’s “age of Bede,” and the main work addressing the subject remained Dorothy Whitelock’s 1951 *The Audience of Beowulf*. In this she had had the opportunity to take into consideration the major archaeological event post-1936, the discovery of the ship-burial at Sutton Hoo, which seemed to confirm much of what the poem said – about burial rites, about Scandinavian connections – and to link it with a date even earlier than Bede. Whitelock concluded moderately that the poem’s sympathy for the Danes made it surely pre-Viking Age, but that the conservatism of Anglo-Saxon society made any date up to about 800 possible.

One might nevertheless wonder why a conference about the date of the poem’s composition seemed a good idea? After all, if one was viewing it for itself, as a work of art, did it matter when it was composed?

It did if one had been paying attention to intellectual currents outside the limited field of *Beowulf*. Briefly, the Gibbonian view of post-Roman social collapse caused by Germanic invasions had become thoroughly uncongenial after World War 2, and had been increasingly replaced by the image of "late antiquity," a process of social adaptation leading towards the united Europe glimpsed in the Age of Charlemagne.⁴ One might sum up by saying that while Eric Stanley was quite correct to sum up much nineteenth-century nationalist philology as "a conspiracy of romantic hopes,"⁵ it had been replaced by another such "conspiracy": just as hopeful, just as politically-motivated, if rather short on romantic appeal.

To the "late antiquity" model, the "age-of-Bede" *Beowulf* was an embarrassment: an early eighth-century work written by someone still in close touch with events of the sixth-century, and inspired by legends of a Germanic and Scandinavian past from far outside the Roman orbit. The poem needed to be made more "Carolingian." A further annoyance for the administrators of scholarship was the shrunken force of comparative Germanic philology, no longer taught in departments of English, but still lurking in Klaeber's edition (1950, revised successively from 1922).

One of the leading proponents of "late antiquity" was the Toronto historian Walter Goffart, and it was his university which mounted a two-pronged attack on the traditional "age of Bede" dating. One was the 1980 Toronto conference itself, and the proceedings published in 1981 as *The Dating of Beowulf*. The other was a book by another Toronto professor, Ashley Crandell Amos, *Linguistic Means of Determining the Date of Old English Literary Texts* (1980).

The latter is readily summarized. In four chapters Amos considers all the tests proposed by traditional philologists of the past, phonological-metrical tests (six sections), syntactic-grammatical tests (five sections), lexical, and stylistic tests. All are found wanting. Section after section ends with the conclusion, "seems of little value" (66), "worthless" (77), "not reliable" (124), "no reason to trust" (125). Indications which might conceivably have value are qualified as too early, too rare, too subjective. Reviews were fairly mixed, but the book gave the impression to many that the work of all those old Germans, Sarrazin, Lichtenheld, Pogatscher, etc., could now be consigned to final oblivion.

The volume of conference proceedings meanwhile contained fourteen items, of which six provided the main thrust for redating the poem to the late ninth or tenth century. Four came from the Toronto

⁴ The situation is well set out in Ward-Perkins's award-winning book of 2005 (3-10). His comments on Sutton Hoo (117-19) are as trenchant as they are unexpected.

⁵ The phrase is quoted by Murray (101) as having been said at the 1980 conference.

home team (Goffart himself, his student Alexander Murray, his spouse Roberta Frank, and the editor Colin Chase), with a fifth from the runologist Raymond Page, and a concluding summary from Eric Stanley. The commonest argument was a negative one. As mentioned above, Dorothy Whitelock had concluded, nearly thirty years before, that the poet's evident sympathy with the Danes marked the poem as pre-Viking. "I doubt whether [the poet] would have spoken in these terms during the Viking Age, or whether his audience would have given him a patient hearing if he had" (24). In Toronto this exact passage was quoted three times by different contributors, and written off as "too uniform and naïve" (Murray, 102), "too simple" (Page, 113), while Frank linked alleged antipathy to the Danes with fictional horror-stories about blood-eagles (123). The repeated point made against Whitelock was that many English people had been able to establish a *modus vivendi* with Scandinavian invaders. Had Whitelock been present, she might well have said in reply that while there no doubt were many local deals and arrangements, there is no sign of the kind of Viking Age documentary flattery which *Beowulf* is supposed to be offering; while by contrast strongly negative views are easy to discover – as shown later by Page himself (1987).

Elsewhere, Frank dismissed sarcastically the idea that knowledge of Scandinavia might have come not from Vikings but from "some dark period in pre-Viking-Age England or even in the Angles' continental homeland" (131). Goffart took a determinedly Carolingian way of explaining the poem, putting forward the theory that the poem's use of *Hugas* for Franks derived from two men called Hugo, such that "for a few decades" in the tenth century some northern Franks might have been known as "the Hughs" (100). Chase supported his colleagues loyally, but the last word was left to Eric Stanley, who was happy to acquiesce in a late date: Stanley had been known ever since his 1964 book on *The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism* to be a determined opponent of the whole Germanic / heroic / pagan complex.

The conference and the volume achieved their main aims. Michael Drouot has made it clear that Toronto 1981, like Tolkien 1936, "gave the people what they wanted": a poem which could be placed anywhere, or even nowhere, since the problem of dating was insoluble (2014: 169). Philologically-challenged explicators of the poem could, in this respect at least, sleep even sounder than before. Yet to every action there is a reaction. The Grendel about to break into the cosy Heorot of *Beowulf* studies had been aroused, nor was there a *Beowulf* waiting to oppose him: his name was Robert D. Fulk.

Fulk's review of the Toronto volume, "Dating *Beowulf* to the Viking Age" (1982) was one of his first publications. It is astonishing in its boldness. Working from Wabash College, a small private institution

in the Midwest, Fulk had no hesitation in taking on his seniors from elite institutions. His first paragraph remarked that "[The contributors'] evidence springs from a variety of fields, the scholarship is invariably impressive, and the results are uniformly disappointing" (341). Much of the review dealt with Kevin Kiernan's views on the production of the manuscript, which have not found favor, but its first five pages deal with the main thrust of the conference, targeting especially Murray, Frank, and Stanley. All three are firmly challenged, or refuted. Murray's view that the poem was propaganda designed to promote King Alfred's sovereignty over the Danes runs into the question, why then is the poem largely about Geats, certainly not a factor in ninth- / tenth-century English politics? With Frank and Stanley, the issues are more directly philological, and centre on the question, not of names, but of name-forms. Frank's argument that the forms *Scedeland* / *Scedenīg* could be late borrowings from Old Norse is "demonstrably untenable" (343), while Stanley's surely facetious remark that Scandinavian names might have been transposed into Old English by someone "unusually good at comparative Germanic philology," if taken seriously, becomes "especially untenable" (344). Fulk's confidence in the ability of traditional philological methods, not to prove, but to disprove and so narrow the range of possible interpretations, was an omen for the future.

Fulk was not alone in his misgivings over the conference proceedings. Theodore Andersson's long review of 1983 appeared in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, the journal of the home team, and he was circumspect but unconvinced, for reasons similar to Fulk's. *Beowulf* remained in Andersson's view "Scandinavian to an extent not always appreciated" (300), but not in ways compatible with a Viking-era date: a view put forward earlier by Nora K. Chadwick (1959), by Robert Farrell (1972), and later by Sam Newton's book on *The Origins of Beowulf and the pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (1992).

Two dissentient voices furthermore emerged from the conference itself, though they were not included in the volume of proceedings. Michael Lapidge (1982) dated the *Liber Monstrorum*, with its entry on *Hyglac*, to no later than 750–800, and probably earlier. Meanwhile its author was linked to St Aldhelm (died 709) by the curious fact that both knew a lost poem by Lucan, presumably because both "had access to the same monastic library" (169), probably Malmesbury. David Dumville's piece on "*Beowulf* and the Celtic World: The Uses of Evidence" (1981) was openly scornful of new attempts to date the poem. "[A]s a historian," he declared, "I am astonished by the laughable quality of historical 'reasoning' which has been offered" (158), while as for textual analysis, the striking thing was "the air of weak helplessness which attends the sections on language and dating" to be found in modern editions (160) – caused, though Dumville does not

say this, by the collapse of philological training. One might sum up by saying that *The Dating of Beowulf* did not impress people outside university English departments. Nevertheless, within those departments, now devoted to literature alone, the volume received fulsome praise.

Fulk-as-Grendel was not discouraged. Several of his later publications are simply if firmly corrective. His 1987 article on Unferth rendered once more untenable Robinson's idea of "Un-intelligence or folly": "*-ferhþ is not a Germanic name-element" (115). "Un-peace" fared no better. A long and thorough study of names in cognate languages concluded that the meaning of the name could not be determined, but was in no way allegorical. The character is called as he is because "Ūnferð happened to be the man's name" (127). In a number of other pieces he discovered a convincing analogue to the Scyld Sceafig story, based on unnoticed Old Norse etymologies (1989b); eliminated "Modprýðo" from the character-list of *Beowulf* (2004b); cast doubt on the popular explanation of "Beo-wulf" as "wolf of the bees" = "bear," the name more probably meaning "servant of the god Beo," cp. ON *Ing-ólfr*, *Thór-ólfr* (2007b). Characteristic was Fulk's 2005 reaction to a long sequence of articles set off by Karl Wentersdorf, dealing with Beowulf's contest with Breca and his apparently incredible escape by swimming from the Hygelac disaster. But was he swimming? Much effort had gone into suggesting that words like *oferswamm* did not mean "swam over." Perhaps Beowulf had a boat, a little skiff maybe (so Wentersdorf 1971)? Patiently, Fulk worked through all possible meanings of the word *sund*, concluding that the word might be indeterminate, but it was possible to come to a conclusion about relative (im)probabilities. In all these Fulk brought to bear the kind of philological argumentation long out of fashion, and by doing so terminated several fruitless controversies and fanciful opinions.

More generally significant were two articles in which Fulk reconsidered Amos's attempted discrediting of linguistic evidence, mentioned above, with particular reference to two of the best-supported linguistic means for determining date. Misunderstandings about meter had led, Fulk showed, to "Difficulties with the reliability of [Amos's] data," such that, for instance, of 79 verses scanned in *Genesis A* with reference to "West Germanic Parasiting," "34 involve some sort of error" (1989a: 121, 122). Similar discrepancies invalidated her dismissal of "contraction" as a dating criterion: "Once the test is applied correctly, it will be apparent that it supports the traditional chronology rather well" (1990: 1-2).

Even more generally, it can be seen that the background or bass-note to almost all of Fulk's work was "the precipitous decline of interest in philology among Anglo-Saxonists since Tolkien's day," which had further created a habit of "anti-philological conservatism" among textual editors (Fulk and Cain 2003: 212). In 1992 Fulk's reaction to

these linked tendencies came to the fore in his *A History of Old English Meter*. By its powerful restatement of philological methods and values, this deserved to be – and may yet become – the most influential work published in Anglo-Saxon literary studies during the twentieth century.

It may seem strange that such a potentially influential work should be on the topic of meter, which was apparently peripheral to almost everything discussed above. Insofar as most critics thought about it at all, they probably took their lead from Tolkien's summary account prefaced to the Clark Hall translation of 1940. Their problem, as teachers, with Eduard Sievers's 1885 explanation of Old English meter – itself the single most impressive achievement of the whole nineteenth-century philological school – was that it seemed so arbitrary. How could one believe in a set of rules never stated or statable by any Anglo-Saxon, and derived statistically? An attempt had accordingly been made to replace Sievers, by John C. Pope (1942), and in 1958 A.J. Bliss brought out his "triumphant vindication of Sievers" (v), but his proposed refinements of the theory were to be rejected by Fulk (see Rafael J. Pascual's essay in the present volume). Meanwhile Thomas Cable had taken a long step forward in dealing with the pedagogic problem, by moving from "descriptive" to "explanatory adequacy." He demonstrated that the five four-position types of Sievers's theory are not arbitrary, but inevitable if (a) a verse is assumed to contain four positions and (b) the second of two adjacent stresses is invariably subordinate to the first (1974: 84-93).

What Fulk's book did, however, was to show that the Sievers theory of metrics was an indispensable tool for establishing the text of poems, for if properly understood it showed up scribal errors, clarified vowel-length, erased ambiguity. By doing so, moreover, it opened the door to a relative chronology and so to literary history: points of such importance that one might think the book's title too modest. Its most unexpected feature was to bring back "Kaluza's law" from the Recycle Bin of old philology. Fulk showed that *Beowulf*, unlike all other Old English poems, obeyed Kaluza's law – an observation "predicated on the distinction between 'long' and 'short' inflectional endings" (1992: 153) – with 98% fidelity. This was something which could only be achieved by someone aware of the phonetic distinction, a distinction which disappeared from the language before Old English reached its classical West Saxon period. If, then, the poem was Mercian in origin (which Fulk thought on balance more likely than Northumbrian) it would have to be dated pre-725. The minutiae of Kaluza's initial observations, however, would have been impossible without the whole post-Grimm tradition of Germanic philology, including Sieversian metrics and the theory of Proto-Germanic trimorcity. In bringing them back to light Fulk rescued something which had escaped the attention

of Amos and everyone else. (As Tom Cable has privately remarked: who ever expected Max Kaluza would turn out to be vital?)

A main theme in Fulk's work was thus the nature of linguistic evidence, at once different from and more objective than the kind of evidence literary critics were used to deploying. He also found it necessary, however, to discuss the nature of evidence itself in a sequence of articles on "Argumentation in Old English philology" (2003), "Archaisms and neologisms" (2007a), "The textual criticism of Klaeber's *Beowulf*" (2007c), and others leading up to the keynote speech for the 2011 Harvard conference, published as "*Beowulf* and Language History" in the follow-up volume *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Neidorf 2014). Fulk's most important point is that while in many areas absolute proof is impossible, this in no way diminishes the value of inductive reasoning, which can establish probabilities, sometimes to a very high level. Two characteristic *Sprüche* are, "In the absence of significant counterevidence, a single, unifying explanation [sc. an early date for *Beowulf*] is to be preferred to a host of *ad hoc* suppositions" (2007a: 277, see also Neidorf 2015b), and, "Probability is unavoidable because certainty is unattainable" (1996b: 18).

These abstract considerations became practical when applied to textual criticism. A further *leitmotiv* in Fulk's work was reaction against "the complacency of textual conservatism" (2004a: 10). One benefit of believing that linguistic evidence could be discounted, and that Old English poems were in any case composed close to the time of their manuscripts, was that one was relieved of much of the duty of emending them into sense. The fact that manuscript readings were often dubious, or impossible, was a challenge that editors – note Dumville on "weak helplessness" – increasingly shrank from. Such tacit avoidance, based all too often on philological insecurity, became a hidden motive in some studies. In Fulk's argument with Frank over *wærc* and *weorc* – he maintained that scribes occasionally replaced Anglian *wærc* ("pain") with the more familiar *weorc* ("labor, toil"), while she maintained that *weorc* possessed a broader semantic range than had been previously recognized – Fulk concluded, on account of the antiprobabilistic reasoning marshalled, that "[Frank's] larger purpose, then, is to safeguard the text of *Beowulf* from emendation" (2004a: 10).

Fulk's rehabilitation of the value of linguistic and metrical evidence for textual criticism bore further fruit in the fourth edition of *Klaeber's Beowulf*, produced by Fulk and his collaborators Robert Bjork and John Niles in 2008. The first edition of this work, by Friedrich Klaeber, goes back to 1922, and its preparation to the 1910s. It marked something of a *translatio imperii*, for Klaeber's move in 1893 from Berlin to Minnesota was eventually matched by the shift from German to Anglo-American dominance of Anglo-Saxon studies. Fulk noted, however, that Klaeber's "larger design of promoting Germanic philology in the

Anglophone world was ultimately unsuccessful" (2007c: 132), toppled, as said at the start of this survey, by Tolkien in 1936. The aim of *Klaeber IV* was to reverse that failure, keeping the immense and invaluable detail of Klaeber's introduction, commentary, and glossary; refining and supplementing all three; explaining textual decisions and adding aids to the reader to a degree beyond what Klaeber had thought necessary; and retaining the utility of the text for many kinds of user, not literary critics alone. If the *History of Meter* has re-valorized philological methods, *Klaeber IV* has made their results accessible to new generations, a development which would have delighted both Klaeber and Tolkien.

Two further results of Fulk's labors need to be noted. One is the Dumbarton Oaks text and translation of the entire Nowell Codex (2010), which makes the immediate manuscript context of *Beowulf* conveniently accessible. The other is a revived interest and belief in the possibility of literary history. This had shown itself as early as (coincidentally) 1982, when Joseph Harris suggested that the post-Tolkien preoccupation with subjective interpretation – coupled with "resignation over the impossibility of establishing facts" (16) – might have had its day, so that one could return more hopefully to literary history. He was seconded by John Niles (1993), though Niles remained committed to the idea of matching the poem to a particular cultural environment, sc. Anglo-Danish syncretism, a procedure condemned by Neidorf (2014b: 6); while by 1994 Harris was even ready to proclaim "the essential failure of the New Critical or *werkimmanent* approaches" and to look past "post-war weariness with anything Germanic" (45, 46).

Nevertheless a comprehensive literary history of Old English seemed as far away as ever. It may be possible to write history without dates, though some have denied it, but without even a chronology? While an obvious *desideratum* for the field, any such project had long been stymied by nervousness over even the most rudimentary chronology for the poetry, by inability to integrate prose and poetry, or Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Latin. This extended hesitation was terminated by *A History of Old English Literature*, by Fulk and his student Christopher M. Cain, a model in its coverage, ending with the unexpectedly up-to-date claim that the chief contribution of Old English to literary studies "may be to serve as a model for dealing with the complexities of extreme textual alterities" (234).

Many other things have happened in *Beowulf*-studies since the start of Fulk's Beowulfian career in 1982, both connected to and independent of the struggle between "Germanic" and "late antique" opinions, between New Critics empowered by Tolkien and old philologists encouraged by Fulk. They are well surveyed in Fulk and Cain, 201–15. A couple of trends may nevertheless be indicated. One has been to try to match the poem to the developing enthusiasms of the academy:

chaos theory (a protraction of the old commitment to multivalency, Earl 1994), women's studies (Chance 1986, Damico 1984, Overing 1990), rather more tepidly, literary theory (for which see Lerer 1997). Another has been to survey and update the past, as in Allen Frantzen's *Desire for Origins* (1990), the *Beowulf Handbook* edited by Bjork and Niles (1997), the "Critical Heritage" survey from myself and Andreas Haarder (1998), and Andy Orchard's *Critical Companion to Beowulf* (2003). The aftermath of *A History of Old English Meter* has moreover been an "unprecedented deluge of philological research," comprehensively listed in Neidorf (forthcoming).

One might close by quoting Hrothgar, *hwæt mē þæs on ēþle edwenden cwōm*, with the reservation that *edwenden* can go both ways: from complacency to disaster, which is what Hrothgar meant, but also from weariness to renewal. There is one further irony which deserves to be noted. This piece began by noting Tolkien's arguably unfortunate influence on the study of his favorite poem. We now know, however, what he meant by some of his elliptical statements. Of these none has been more influential (apart from the injunction to read the poem as a poem) than his injunction against reading it as history: "The illusion of historical truth and perspective ... is largely a product of art"; "seekers after history must beware lest the glamour of Poesis overcome them" (1936: 247, 248). Similar cautions have been regularly voiced, notably by Roberta Frank, whose essay on the poet's "Sense of History" repeats the idea of "illusion" before moving to the poem's "need to establish in the present an ideological basis for national unity," sc. in the Viking Age (1982: 64).

Yet since the posthumous publication of Tolkien's *Finn and Hengest* (1982) we know that Tolkien took the poem as history very seriously indeed. His explanation of the Finnsburg story in fact looks like a situation familiar from World War 2: Free Jutes, taking refuge from Danish aggression with the Frisians at the court of Finn, there encounter their bitterest enemies, the Jutish-collaborationist "Half-Danes" of Hnæf and Hengest. This imaginatively explains several of the detailed problems of both Fragment and Episode.⁶ But what did Tolkien mean by "the product of art"? His partial commentary on the poem, published in 2014 along with his translation and his fairy-tale *ur-Beowulf* "Sellic Spell," at last makes this clear. Tolkien did not at all think that the whole setting was fiction. Far from it, he developed a realistic chronology for all events in the poem, including the unknown *herespēd* of Hrothgar, and the moment when it became advisable for Hrothgar to

⁶ Tolkien's complex scenario is accurately fictionalized in a "young adult" novel by Jill Paton Walsh, *Hengest's Tale* (1966). It is likely that she learned it either from her uncle, A.J. Bliss, Tolkien's editor, or her Oxford supervisor, Elaine Griffiths, Tolkien's pupil. The novel is dedicated "To Elaine."

switch alliance from Swedes to Geats (156–8, 216–20, 322–3). The “art” lay not in inventing all this, but in inserting Beowulf at the right moment.

Tolkien would have been glad to know of another utterly unexpected archaeological event, as potentially significant for *Beowulf* as Sutton Hoo, namely the ongoing discoveries at Gamle Lejre, described (up to 2007, but they did not stop there) in a volume edited by John Niles. Briefly, Hrothgar is said to have had the intention of building a hall “greater than the sons of men have ever heard of,” and that is what the archaeologists have found – only so far they have found six of them! – at the traditional base of the Scyldings / Skjöldungar at Lejre. Opinions vary as to what this means, but whatever the final conclusion, historians are much slower now to write off *Beowulf* as historically valueless.

Times change, scholarly templates change, and we change with them. Despite all vicissitudes of fashion, and despite the way in which his own influence now begins to be overturned, Tolkien would nevertheless be glad to recognize his true successor, as “a pure philologist,” as indeed the rehabilitator if not the savior of philology, in Robert D. Fulk. And yet the end is not ...

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